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TOMORROW'S WORLD AND THE CHURCH TOMORROW

HENRY PITNEY VAN DUSEN

Union Theological Seminary

No one who tests the pulse of contemporary sentiment can have failed to note signs of a reviving interest in the church. For some years, it has been possible to summarize youth's attitude toward Christianity in two phrases—steadily deepening interest in religion; steadily deepening indifference to the organizations and institutions of religion. The second of these characteristics must now be revised to a feeling out after "The Church." Not after the existing churches as many have known them, to be sure—the Northern Presbyterian Church of Pinville, western South Carolina, or the "Christian Church" at Miller's Crossroad, glaring defiance across its four corners at three other Christian congregations of various breeds. But after something which can be suggested only by the word "The Church." As the late Archbishop of Canterbury remarked on his last visit to the United States, "It is no accident that, certainly in the country from which I come, and as I have been two or three times assured, in this country also, the minds of students who are seriously considering the Christian faith at all, are becoming more and more occupied with the doctrine of the Church."[1] Here, as always, the term to which men instinctively have recourse to voice inarticulate longing is significant beyond its obvious meaning. What is that significance? What is the deeper meaning of this turning toward "The Church?"

II

In part, especially as it appears among the ministry, it is a frank admission of personal limitations. Modern Protestantism had tended to foster the conception of the "big minister" in a "big" church, thundering from a "big" pulpit final wisdom on all manner of thorny topics—historical, literary, economic, political, as well as religious. The whole vogue of the "big minister"—the ecclesiastical counterpart of the big businessman—has passed. To the most representative and finest young men coming on into the ministry today, it is without appeal. They would cast the minister's

[1] William Temple, *The Church and its Teaching Today*, p. 9.

rôle in humbler dimensions within the drama of that great corporate pilgrimage of the spirit which is the church. They would seek anonymity through the impersonality of gown or vestments. They would symbolize the preacher's special contribution to worship, the sermon, as important but always secondary, by moving the pulpit from its conspicuous centrality and replacing it by communion table or cross, permanent and impersonal symbols of the true Object and Lord of worship. They would buttress their own limited gifts by extensive tapping of the church's accumulated stores of ritual and written prayer. This loss of self-confidence among the ministry is not without its dangers. Who would question that, in the main, it holds hopeful promise for the Christian church?

The turning toward the church is, in part, a reflection of the temper of the age. In a day of mounting totalitarianisms, how shall religion survive unless it achieve more effective corporate embodiment which can, if need be, stand over against the state and every pressure of organized coercion in defense of the life of the spirit? As Canon Barry wrote on the eve of the recent war:

> In the face of the mighty drive towards Fascism, individual religion is helpless. Christianity can barely survive amid the intolerant blizzards of mass rule . . . save as a society conscious of itself and organized by its own transcendent allegiance. Nothing but a revival of the Church can withstand the usurpations of Cæsarism.

The military defeat of one expression of Cæsarism has not altered the fundamental situation.

But there is a deeper issue here than the mere erection of one corporate agency in resistance against others, than the mere defense of "the liberty of the individual." How shall we have *spiritual* liberty—the only liberty finally worth preserving—unless we rediscover what our deeper faith has always known: there is no true liberty for anyone save in self-dedication to the fellowship of all? Here, also, there is danger lest religion, under suasion from dominant forces in the secular sphere, create another ecclesiastical counterpart of an unsound and unworthy secular ideal. But, in the light of the deeper issue just hinted, who can question that there is essential validity in the trend?

In part, the turning toward the church is a by-product of the renaissance of worship. And this is among the most unmistakable features of the contemporary religious scene. Here, also, trends within youth have been prophetic. For some years, student groups whose theological conviction is of the flimsiest, who disdain the churches as they have known them, and whose intense preoccupation is the remaking of a distraught society, have been crying out for "worship." Their elders, as so often, are following in their train. And the "worship" eagerly sought is not that of the individual in

his solitariness—still, only too clearly, there is dearth of private prayer—but corporate worship, with generous use of form and ritual. This leads to the church—the only deeply satisfying locus of worship, as well as the treasure house of the materials of worship.

In part, the turning toward the church springs from a rediscovery of the riches of Christian tradition. Or, more accurately, a search for such a rediscovery. This is hinted in another phrase much voiced today, the widespread yearning for a "catholic Christianity." Not a few Christians, and they among the more mature, seek firm grounding for Christian living, not within the life of modern culture or even of traditional Protestantism, but in the rich, deep stream of cumulative experience which has flowed down nineteen centuries toward us. They would find a place within that catholic tradition and drink deep of its wisdom and its faith. Danger, here, too, but even greater promise.

Here is suggested still another motive in the return to the church—the search for a new and firmer ground of authority. Here, once again, trends in the thought of the younger generation, especially as they came to voice in the armed forces, are significant. Chaplains are well-nigh unanimous in their report: this generation wants authority, religious authority. The fate of Christian authority in its successive phases is a familiar tale: on the one hand, the slow, tedious erection through the early centuries of the absolute authority of infallible church and infallible pope; on the other, for Protestants, the destruction, at the Reformation, of these infallible authorities and their replacement by an authority as commanding, the absolute authority of an infallible book; and finally, for children of the modern world, the disintegration, in the nineteenth century, of that infallible authority and its replacement by the authority of individual judgment, an authority which, under the ecstatic self-adulation of the modern mind, tended to become the opinion of the latest vogue of secular thought, with such slogans as: "Every minister his own interpreter of Christian truth," "Every man his own theologian." As a result, every arbitrary whim of individual inspiration became absolute authority, Christian truth, God's will for that life—*and* for the lives under tribute to its power. We observe reaction from such radical individualism as one of the dominant features of our time. The same revulsion which has unseated the "big minister" has undermined omniscience, whether in pew or pulpit or chair of theology. The day of the solitary monarch of truth has, for our time, passed. Yet men must have guidance. Not absolute authority; that is not given to us. But adequate guidance. Where shall such guidance be sought?

Where, as a matter of fact, would we best look for Christian truth, Christian wisdom, the Christian ethic? There is available to our search a great, broad, deep stream of corporate life which had its fountain source

in Jesus of Nazareth and the tiny band who gathered to his call, and which has flowed down through nineteen centuries toward us. That stream has suffered shallows and whirlpools, eddies and stagnant marshes. But there is a main current—strong, deep, relatively pure—which has furnished direction and power, which sprang unmistakably from the fountain source, and which has reappeared, issuing afresh, from almost every one of the towering figures along the way—Paul and James and John, Augustine and Bernard and Francis, Luther and Wesley and Newman—down to our own day. If we could fasten upon that central current and drink of its clear waters surely, would we not say, "*There* is Christian truth"? And, if we can discern its teaching on any great issue before us, would we not be inclined to declare, "*There* is Christian guidance for me, whatever the denial of the contemporary mind"? No two Christians will survey that main current identically, to be sure; here, still, is the vital function of personal judgment. But the material upon which private judgment is to work is the accumulated and cumulative wisdom of the Christian centuries. And the locus of that material is within the soul of the Christian church. No wonder men today, despairing of the trustworthiness of current wisdom, desperately in earnest for the fate of their society and their faith, are "turning toward the church."

Then, of course, one must take note of developments within the life of the churches themselves. It is hardly too much to say that the word *church* has suddenly become the pivotal word of contemporary Christianity. "Let the church be the Church," proclaimed the Oxford World Christian Conference of 1937—a slogan which has echoed and reëchoed from end to end of Christendom. Secular movements rooted in quasi-religious faiths, the precarious hazards of the "younger churches" of the mission field, the threat to deeply rooted Christianity in Russia and Germany and elsewhere, the reaching out toward ecumenical reunion—all these factors demand clarification of thought concerning the church's nature and functions. It is a day when the issues and possibilities of Christian reunion are to the fore as seldom in the history of Christendom, when our churches are feeling out for their true reality as "the Church," when powerful pressures in the contemporary scene as well as deep longings within the hearts of Christians are drawing the scattered fragments of the Church together.

But, the reviving interest in the Church has still a deeper source. It springs, in part, from a new understanding of the true nature of man and of his salvation. We comprehend more clearly the essentially social character of all true life of the spirit. The whole idea of a merely personal, individual religion is seen to be self-deceived. The Christian faith can be comprehended in its fullness only by attention to its continuing life and growth and travail in the Church which is "his body." By the same token, the Christian life can be apprehended by the individual, never in his solitariness, but

only as his life is guided, chastened, strengthened, and redeemed within the community of his fellows. Man may find both himself and God only within a spiritual fellowship of mutual loyalty and responsibility. The Church is the imperfect foretaste of the family of God which is his ideal intention for us all.

III

In the light of this widespread reaching out toward a recovery of the church, we turn to face the days ahead—that mysterious, sombre, yet alluring future.

We stand on the threshold of tomorrow. Of the character of that future we need attempt no detailed delineation. In one sense, we enter a future shrouded in well-nigh impenetrable obscurity. The president of one of our large eastern universities reports a recent conversation with a solicitous parent. Having scheduled an appointment well in advance, the lady entered, and confronting the president, asked him solemnly, "Mr. President, how are you preparing our sons for tomorrow's world?" To which, he quickly replied, "Madam, if you will tell me what tomorrow's world will be like, I can tell you how we are preparing your sons for it." No one is sufficiently wise, no one possesses a sufficiently comprehensive grasp of the infinite complex of controlling factors in their intricate interrelationships to be able to forecast with reasonable probability the contours of political, of economic, of international life fifty, thirty, ten years hence; or to prophesy the convulsions and cataclysms which these decades will bring forth.

In another sense, we know all too well the deeper characteristics of that future. They supply the background of all our thought, the undertones of all our conversation, the enfolding darkness of all our expectations. We know it will be a future scarred with measureless human suffering. We know it will be a future rifted by stress and conflict. We know it will be a future which will wrap all mankind in a single bundle of destiny. We know it will be a future in which civilization itself may hang in the balance.

Face to face with that unforeseeable, and yet all too readily predictable, future stand Christians and their churches. What gifts for its need do they bring?

It is a commonplace among us that the past century has been the great century of Christian history. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the life of the Christian churches of the world has been marked by two major developments—a movement of expansion and a movement of consolidation. In these latter years, the Christian movement has reached to the ends of the earth; so that there are today vigorous and multiplying, if sometimes tiny, cells of the Christian church among every race and in virtually every land. In our day for the first time, Christianity has become

a world religion. Likewise, in these latter years, the impulses of proliferation and partition which have characterized, and cursed, the Christian movement from the outset have given way to powerful centripetal resolve to co-ordinate and even unify the multitudinous and diverse branches and agencies of Christian influence, giving birth to the varied expressions of what we call "ecumenical" Christianity. Only in our day has non-Roman Christendom begun to become in a significant sense a world community.

The latest chapter in that history—Christian churches under wartime testing—is not unworthy of what preceded. If one may employ the vernacular, the war has been the pay-off of world Christianity in both its aspects, the Christian world mission *and* the movement for Christian unity. In both aspects, the Christian churches of the world have recorded one of the most glorious chapters in the nineteenth-century chronicle.

Moreover, it has of late frequently been remarked that Christian faith moves today in a more favorable intellectual climate than a generation ago. No one charged with the task of seeking to expound and justify that faith to the oncoming generation—whether in the universities or in the armed forces or in the ordinary parish—can doubt that. Ours is a shaken, a humbled, a despairing, a longing generation, not only open but eager for convincing and controlling certainties. Today the winds of doctrine are blowing more favorably for Christian faith than for half a century. Let us give thanks for that.

But every sailor, even an amateur skipper, knows well that not one but two factors determine the direction and movement of his craft. Not only are there the wind currents which blow upon the surface; there are also the deep, undersurface tides, running silently and inexorably, and controlling his advance or retreat far more powerfully than the surface breezes.

It is true that the surface winds blow today in directions more helpful to the Christian church. But the tides—the primordial and resistless currents which hold our culture in their grip and rule its major movements—these have been, on the whole, setting dead against our desire and our concern, and for more than a generation. Two world wars in a quarter century, and humanity impotent to salvage its own civilization from disintegration, are only the most obvious proof. Despite all statistics of church growth and church prosperity, Christianity is, in the larger view, not gaining ground. We are not even holding our own.

To the testings of tomorrow, we bring two major assets: 1. To an age destined to survive, or to expire, as one world we bring a world church. We have said that, in the past century, Christianity has become, for the first time a *world* reality. For the first time, and in the nick of time. No one who studies closely the record of Christian churches in the war can miss this truth. Only because they were cells within a living world organism,

sustained by its strength when in isolation they must have perished, was the survival of many of them possible. Cut off though they have often been from direct contact, they have been upheld by contagion of heroism and support from sister churches, not infrequently those of "enemy" lands. The record of the Christian churches in wartime, so far as it is a worthy one, is a record of a world church, a church brought into existence by the outreach of the Christian world mission in the past century. Amidst planetary war, only a world church has proven strong enough to endure.

If this has been true of churches amidst planetary war, how much truer of churches struggling to endure amidst global disintegration, and seeking to bring some surcease to its conflicts, some healing to its wounds, some cure of its divisions. Whether Christianity will succeed in saving our imperiled civilization, who dares prophesy? This much we know—if it does succeed, it will be only because it has at long last become a world reality. Yes, and because all our churches and their leaders come increasingly to recognize that reality, to be thoroughly informed of its existence and its possibilities, to think and act always as servants of Christ's holy catholic church throughout the world.

2. To an age destined to survive, if at all, as *one* world, we bring the beginnings of a *united* church. Only the beginnings, to be sure; towards the ultimate goal of a single body of Christ, hardly more than a few scattered anticipations. And, yet, against the failures of earlier centuries, significant first steps. For the first time in nineteen centuries, the Christian church has begun to become a world organism. For the first time, and in the nick of time. This fact, likewise, the student of the war record cannot miss. The truth is: In every area of severest testing—in occupied Europe, in Germany, in China, in Japan, among the youngest churches—fidelity in witness and effectiveness in action have been in direct ratio to the unity of all Christian groups. Old barriers have fallen; ancient antagonisms have been laid aside; Christians of all parties have joined forces as never before. Nothing less than the whole Christian community has proven able "to withstand, and having done all, to stand." Meantime, the world organs created so recently by the churches as channels of common effort and expressions of communal fellowship, centring in the World Council of Churches, have spoken and acted in behalf of all non-Roman Christendom with an authority and a fruitfulness without precedent in earlier Christian history.

If only a united church is effective amidst planetary war, how much more against the demands of this fevered peace. This is manifestly true of the church's world mission. But it is not one whit less true of the churches' work at home, in this nation and in every local community. None of the churches' greatest problems can be adequately met, none of their most clamant tasks can be worthily discharged save by the massed strength of

all the churches. In the ancient world, all roads led to Rome. In contemporary politics, all questions end in Moscow. In the life of the Christian churches in our age, every problem and every responsibility point to a single inexorable necessity—Christian unity.

Let us be quite clear what *is* the Christian unity required. Not, in the first instance, organic union of all the sects. But an obligation far more immediate and immediately achievable—the wholehearted pooling of resources, the conscription of ablest leadership out of every church for the service of the whole church, loyal enlistment in shared tasks at whatever private or organizational sacrifice—that the church of Christ may proclaim a single evangel, show forth a common front, advance massed strength, at every level—in each local community, in this nation, across the earth. And the first essential is that our churches and their leaders should come increasingly to recognize that unity, to be thoroughly informed of its existence and its agencies, to think and act always as servants of Christ's one holy catholic church.

IV

A final word—but the most important by far. There is a strange paradox in the Christian church's intercourse with culture. The effects which history adjudges to have been the church's most important influences upon culture were not at all the effects which the church was striving to achieve. In the main, they have been unforeseen and unintended by-products of her pursuance of her major tasks.

This has been true in every age. History discovers the most significant function of the Christian church in successive epochs to have been the custodian of the funded values of the past, in times of cultural disintegration and darkness; the focal principle of corporate life, in periods of social stability and cohesion; the germinative seed plot of the most fecund, most creative, most radical forces, in times of social transmutation and advance.

None of these things did the church set out to be.

The church of the Dark Ages did not aim to be the guardian of historic, intellectual, artistic, and cultural values. The church has, in fact, been a conserving factor in history because, in the measure that she was true to Jesus' faith and fidelity, she possessed inextinguishable vitality to which cultural and secular values could adhere and thus win preservation.

The church of the Middle Ages did not aim to be the unifying principle of civilization. The church has, in fact, been the focal centre of community and national and even world life because, in the measure that she held firm grip on Jesus' certainty of God, she possessed the only concept adequate to furnish focal unity for corporate existence.

The church of the modern period did not aim to set loose revolutionary influences of reform within society. The church has, in fact, been the seed

plot of creative, radical forces because, in the measure that she was possessed by Jesus' vision and compassion, she has been incurably fecund and world-remaking.

The church's distinctive ministries to civilization have been mainly quite inevitable by-products of the church's fidelity to her main purpose: to be, in the world, a continuation of Christ's life among men.

So, in these latter days. As the late Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out in his oft-quoted enthronement sermon, Christians who went out to the ends of the earth all through the nineteenth century were not aiming to create a world-wide community. They were seeking to bring the Christian gospel to those all over the world who were without it. "Almost incidentally, the great world Christian fellowship has come into existence. But it has come to be. That is the great new fact of our time."

So, likewise, Christian leaders were not seeking to effect the unity of Christ's church in order that it might serve a global age, but in order that it might fulfill Christ's intention for his church. But the community of Christ's church has begun to be, almost incidentally, an earnest, a foretaste of the community of nations which could be and must be.

So it will be tomorrow. We do not know the greatest gift the church will bring to society in our generation. We do know *how* it will be brought—as the church fulfills its main and central purpose: to be, in the world, a continuation of Christ's life among men. To an age destined to survive, if at all, only through profound spiritual regeneration and reëmpowerment, we bring a GOSPEL, glorious news—light for groping minds, hope for despairing hearts, strength for faltering wills. The church's major task is to declare and to demonstrate, by word of speech and by word of life, the glorious good news of Jesus Christ.

In our time, however, the relation between obedience to the church's obligation to Christ and discharge of its largest service to mankind is more intimate. The conditions for its wider service are also the conditions for the fulfillment of its own central responsibility. This is the teaching of these latter days: the church is strong in the measure that it is world-wide; and wherever it achieves world-wide unity, God grants to it, and through it in some measure to its environing culture, rebirth.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TODAY AND TOMORROW

HOWARD WAYNE SMITH
Ardmore, Pennsylvania

THE INEVITABLE discussion about the challenging perils facing the Christian movement and the defensive measures to be used against them is all about us again. The dislocations of a world-girdling war and the explosion of a new scientific threat to civilization in the atomic bomb deepen the concern of many observers of the current scene. As usual there is a wide variation in the reports of actual conditions and their proposed remedies. The trends are indicated as moving in opposite directions according to the viewpoint of the reporter. The measures held necessary to correct the situation and steady the ark of religion on the stormy seas are equally contradictory. A real problem is set for those who would be Christian leaders in these times. One hesitates to add to the confusion but cannot escape the urgent responsibility to speak his mind.

This determination is strengthened by two articles printed in the CROZER QUARTERLY, which illustrate the present contradictions. One appeared in the Book Review section of the April number and the other is to be found in this issue.

Dr. Alban G. Widgery concludes his review of John Baillie's *What Is Christian Civilization?* thus: "The spiritual constitution of the modern man revolts from forms of Christian doctrines and finds no nourishment in some continued forms of Christian worship. That so many today have no interest in the stale bread of Christian tradition gives me hope for our civilization."

This student evidently regards Christian doctrines, forms of worship, and the content of Christian tradition, as they are currently presented, as road blocks to Christian progress. The exposure of these matters to the cleansing light of criticism and their correction, by a process of streamlining, to modern efficiency, is the real hope of Christian advance in the world of today and tomorrow. We share that hope and the estimate of conditions on which it is based.

The positive assertions of Dr. Henry Pitney Van Dusen, in his Crozer commencement address of last May, printed in this issue of the QUARTERLY, stand over against the conclusions of Dr. Widgery in shining contrast. Any pronouncement of one occupying so prominent a position on the top level of Christian leadership as the distinguished president of Union Theological Seminary will have a wide hearing and secure much approval. To accept his premises and prophecies, although put out under

so intriguing a title as "Tomorrow's World and the Church Tomorrow," without measuring them by the yardstick of actualities and without the use of fair-minded criticism is, however, not mandatory. On this account we propose to examine Dr. Van Dusen's article in some detail.

Our author is sure that there are signs of reviving interest in the church. Youth is asserted to have a steadily deepening interest in religion coupled with a steadily deepening indifference to the organizations and institutions of religion. In spite of this indifference, Dr. Van Dusen claims to detect among youth "a feeling out after 'The Church.'" It is difficult to discover here anything to quiet the revolts from forms of Christian doctrines, to end the dissatisfaction with the continued forms of Christian worship, or to substitute nourishment for the stale bread of Christian tradition. It is our opinion that these revolts, dissatisfactions, and indifferences do exist in quite as vivid a form as the "feeling out after the church," and are far more influential presently. It is hard to see how tinkering with forms and creeds and institutions will answer the spiritual hunger of confused men. The feeling after the church may hold promise for the institutionalized church, but does it hold promise for Christianity as a way of life? We shall see.

Basically, Dr. Van Dusen's idea is ecclesiastical. Everything turns on the institution—the church. One dislikes to call any thesis of a liberal, like the author, reactionary. Yet the effort to centre all Christian progress in a more or less totalitarian, corporate church certainly harks back to the Middle Ages.

Will the strengthening of the church in its government, its rituals, its creeds, and its traditions meet the needs of tomorrow's world? One thinks not. Those needs can better be met by freeing the Christian movement from its impedimenta and allowing its adherents to move forward freely along lines of Christian action. Which is paramount: Christian theology, Christian formalisms, or Christian ethics?

To examine Dr. Van Dusen's article closely is to see even more clearly how far off the beam he really is. The main currents of modern life do not move along the channels assumed. Dr. Van Dusen points out that many ministers, especially the younger ones, admit their personal limitations and declares that they seek anonymity in certain specified ways.

> They would seek anonymity through the impersonality of gowns or vestments. They would symbolize the preacher's special contribution to worship, the sermon; as important but always secondary, by moving the pulpit from its conspicuous centrality and replacing it by communion table or cross, permanent and impersonal symbols of the true Object and Lord of Worship. They would buttress their own limited gifts by extensive tapping of the church's accumulated stores of ritual and written prayer.

The quick retort to this is something like the American general's "Nuts" to the Germans at the siege of Bastogne. We do not believe that the imitation of the garbs and altars of state-supported churches will, in any sense, answer the requirements of disillusioned people in these days.

It is something to have Dr. Van Dusen admit that the course which he says the younger ministers are following has its dangers. Those dangers, in our judgment, far outweigh the advantages. The world demands a pure and undefiled religion, free of officialdom, dogma, and formalism. Christianity does not need to move in the direction indicated by tradition in order to serve the world's distress and confusion. Something more direct and powerful is called for.

The practice of wearing clerical garb may be growing, but that is no proof of its validity. If the wearing of clerical clothes and the donning of a Geneva gown in the pulpit mean anything, it is that the person involved is assuming to himself a privileged, or at least a separated, position. He regards himself as an ecclesiastical official and means to be so recognized by putting on the uniform of the office.

Some years ago, this writer was one of a small group who interviewed a distinguished visiting English Baptist minister. Asked why he wore the clerical garb, he replied that it secured for him recognition among the people and a certain measure of respect. It did not occur to him that he was setting himself off from the rest of the population and deepening the regrettable chasm between ministry and laity. Baptists have always deplored that separation and have used every endeavor to wipe it out. This present age cries out for democracy. It wants its ministers of religion to be people, to live like people, and, yes, to dress like people.

Another incident of recent days further illustrates this point. Two ministers, in everyday clothes, were approached by a man who had been drinking. He bemoaned the dropping and breaking of two other bottles of liquor he had been carrying in a paper bag under his arm and asked for help in recouping the loss. One of the ministers tried to offer him some good advice. Then he wanted to know what the business of these two men was. When they told him they were ministers, he swore and wanted to know why they didn't dress like clergymen so that he would not have appealed to them for help. He really thought they were businessmen who would help out a fellow in distress. I wonder how many people really needing help are fenced off by the clerical garb and what opportunities for ministry are so lost. Surely the "caste" system does not help Christian democracy. It is as repellent to democracy in the church as the caste system is in the army. The returning serviceman is tired of salutes, insignia of rank, and all the other trappings of the

armed services. He does not want to find even a small imitation of that among the leaders of the Christian movement.

The growing habit of referring to a minister, in colloquial speech, as the "Reverend" or the "Reverend Jones," coupling the adjective with the family name, sounds a new depth in the unfortunate cleavage between laity and ministry. Beside being atrocious English, as the beloved William Lyon Phelps pointed out so often, the phrase assumes a superiority in the minister that is wholly nonexistent. It may seem too little a thing to require notice but it ought to be frowned down at every opportunity. It does not make for the identification of the minister with the common people who constitute so large a part of the field in which he works.

Something of the same taint may be detected in the use of the word *clergyman*. It, too, serves to emphasize the class separation we have been deploring. We have come a long way from the days of evangelical triumph in this country, when the preacher was conspicuously one of the people. His only title was that of "Elder" or "Pastor" or "Preacher." Ask those early circuit riders what they think of all this modern trend into officialdom. They will tell you that they were listened to because they were of the people and knew what the people needed and gave it to them straight from the shoulder, maybe in shirt sleeves or from the back of a saddle horse. In any case they would not be stymied by unnecessary trappings.

History does not flow backward, and nobody wants it to. But history has its lessons for contemporary life. In the present connection the lesson seems clear. The difference, if any, between the minister and other people is not that he is of higher stuff than they, but rather that he has discovered a way of life in Christ that he wishes to share with his fellow men. He is no divinity to be reverenced but only a man like other men. He has nothing they may not have. His word to any bowing the knee before him is; "Stand on your feet. I, too, am a man. Yes, I'm a minister, but that just means that I serve men because I am a bond slave of Jesus Christ. By his grace and by that alone, I am what I am."

Eccentricity of dress and peculiar behavior should be eschewed by the minister. Let him dress decently and behave orderly so that men may feel the influence of the Christian character he possesses. Let him be careful that ecclesiastical millinery—vestments, gowns, garbs, gaiters, spats, or stoles—does not short-circuit the dynamic force of his character. It is character, not dress, that endows a Christian leader with power. That character has its supreme chance when its possessor meets people on their own level, as did Jesus, and refuses to hide behind artificial barriers of officialdom. This modern world will brook no privileged persons, priests, clergymen, bishops, popes; these will all follow the

captains and kings, as they depart from the modern scene, into obscurity.

Dr. Van Dusen further notes the installation by many ministers—and again the younger ones—of a chancel arrangement at the pulpit end of the church. This imitation of the Gothic cathedral may be useful when worship is made a sort of pageant like the Roman Mass. Will it help the people to understand that reality in religion is what they need?

The altar, with the crucifix, is essential to the reënactment of the Christian drama that bloodied Calvary. However, is drama what a hungry world waits for? Altars and high places received their death blow at the hands of Jesus Christ. He died once for all. Their reëstablishment in these days is an anachronism. "The Object and Lord of Worship" requires no symbol, impersonal or otherwise. Which do we worship: the cross or the "strange man who hung on that cross"?

In any case, the real sign of Christ's victory is not the cross but an empty tomb. "That I might know him and the power of his resurrection" is the unforgettable prayer of Paul. It may be possible to symbolize that mystery by a perfectly empty and unadorned place at the chancel end of the church building. I do not know what church architects might do with that idea, but I am sure that it is a truer symbol of Christian truth than a gilded cross on an altar surrounded by candles and flowers.

The prohibition against images in the Hebrew decalogue was based on sound psychology. Worship, stimulated by a symbol, tends inevitably to become worship of the symbol itself. This modern world needs the inspiration of the man who died on the cross rather than the glorification of the instrument of his death. Without the man the cross is nothing. The world needs the man, not a symbol of him.

Another result of the ceremonialism on which Dr. Van Dusen relies is the trend among the younger men to apply the term *sanctuary* to the church auditorium. To one of Quaker ancestry and Baptist upbringing this is anathema beyond words. The church building to our fathers was a "meetinghouse." There they met each other in Christian fellowship and together they met God in adoring worship. Their experiences gave them a feeling of devotion to the place full of memories of experienced blessings. But to call this meeting place a "sanctuary"—that they would never do.

The creation of exclusive sacred places is as divisive today as it was when Jesus told the Samaritan woman: "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." That hour has come. There are no exclusive places of worship. The whole world is God's sanctuary, and men may worship him, when and as they please, anywhere. Such worship is neither ceremonial, ritualistic, formal, nor spectacular. It exists when any where any man lifts his

heart to God and goes on to obey his will. This is the message for a lost, scattered, and leaderless world. Worship is of the spirit, not of the place.

Church buildings may be used for purposes of worship. Always it must be worship of the people and by the people with results for the people and not some regimented ritual or compelled ceremonial. The doors should not be barred to any hungry soul. Snobbishness does not befit the doorkeepers. Let the children come to their Father as they will, with no prescribed genuflections or other mummery. The world wants no superstituous worship in superstitious places. It wants simple, real, and direct approach to the Fatherly God of all.

The visitor to many evangelical churches may see another sign of reaction. Somewhere, usually in a conspicuous place, is a picture of Jesus. Before it may be a table, disguised as an altar, with an open Bible on it, flanked by candles, unlighted to be sure, but candles nevertheless. These are rife in what are called "worship centres" in Sunday-school rooms where the younger children congregate. I have even seen the like in a business office. Apart from the pretentiousness of it all, what does this do to the children? First of all, there is a misrepresentation. Jesus was never photographed. He never sat for a portrait painter. Bluntly, we do not know what he looked like, and it is just as well.

Once I was perplexed by the action of a missionary preacher who was trying to reach the Polish people of Philadelphia. It was in the days when publishing houses issued rolls of pictures in illustration of the Sunday-school lessons. On the walls of the English-speaking church where the Polish mission was conducted these pictures were on display. The missionary, however, persisted in taking them all down before he began his services. Asked why, the reply was that these things were too much like the icons of the Russian churches and the stations of the cross of the Roman church. This evangelist wanted nothing so misleading in the environment of enlightenment into which he desired to lead his people. This poses the question as to what these worship centres and pageants before pictures of Christ are doing to the children of the churches? Have we nothing better to offer this spiritually anæmic world in which we live?

If a cross may be used as an aid to worship, why not a rosary as an aid to prayer and a consecrated medal as assurance of security? The area of formal ceremonialism toward which the church seems to be moving has been mighty fertile ground for the growth of such superstitions. From them all and the barren ground of formalism into which they lead, Good Lord, deliver us.

Something clamors to be said about the use of ritual and the habit

of reading prayers. Certainly there are rich stores of thought in the ancient rituals and splendid language in many of the prayers therein to be found. In worship the spirit of man reaches out for the surety of God. Are canned words, however ancient, or prescribed forms, however beautiful, the real media through which the soul feels after its God? The minister is the prayer leader of his people. This means that he understands their present needs and desires. This, I think, can be accomplished best by living with them, sitting where they sit, and sharing their concerns. It will help to this end if the minister steeps his mind in the best of devotional literature at his disposal and becomes familiar with the prayers of other men. But should he read these prayers, or even prayers of his own composition? My answer is in the negative. If the young man is too lazy or too incompetent to make his own prayers in the leading of his worship, let him at least memorize what he uses and so appear, to be spontaneous.

The laziest preacher would hardly follow the continuous habit of reading other men's sermons in his pulpit. The seasoned churchgoer would soon discover the musty aroma of these relics of the past. But there are sermons in the records of the church quite as effective in their day as the recorded prayers and rituals. There is the eloquent John Chrysostom, the fearsome Jonathan Edwards, the persuasive Charles G. Finney, and a host of others equally well known and good for their times. The question is, however, Will they be good for our times? This test must be applied to both prayers and sermons. They must adequately deal with the problems and perplexities of modern life. The element of contemporaneous application must be in the sermon and in the prayer that is to answer modern man's need. The slave to the ritualism and tradition of the past can never be a minister to his own age. If he is not that, he is nothing!

Much emphasis is placed by Dr. Van Dusen on the "worship service." The Sunday morning gathering of the church is rightly regarded as of prime importance. In that service all its elements have their valid function. No one of them, not even the sermon, can be said to be secondary to any other. The successful service blends the instruments of praise (music), the periods of prayer and meditation, the hearing of instruction (Bible reading), and the interpretation of truth (the sermon) in such fashion as to produce the highest degree of inspiration and determination on the part of those present to make the Christian view of life triumphant in their own lives and throughout society. Anything less than this is failure. It requires industry and thought on the part of the leader, and, more than all else, the display of honest endeavor to give reality to the Christian emphasis.

There is still power in the spoken word. Winston Churchill's rotund phrases about "blood, sweat, and tears" did a profitable business, and they will be long remembered. The persuasive tones of that master politician, Franklin D. Roosevelt, put all the magnetic power of human speech into two simple words, "My friends." And he, too, will be long remembered. It may be said that these were masters of speech. All preachers are not such masters, but the masters point the way for others less gifted. It is too bad to whisper into the ears of our young preachers the subtle temptation that the sermon is secondary. I would tell the young man that the sermon is one of the vital essentials of his ministry and that skill in it is to be trained for as the athlete trains for his games. This indispensable tool of the ministry cannot be neglected with impunity.

A dramatic young preacher glibly began an address to the Northern Baptist Convention by asserting that preaching is doomed. In spite of his nervousness about the printed page, the movies, and the radio, as rivals of the preacher, he is still preaching, and so are countless others. He might have added television to his list of fears if he had known about it. Even that will make no difference in the result. The "foolishness of preaching" will continue to be the minister's wisdom.

The day of the long sermon and the windy discussion of platitudes has gone forever, and we rejoice in that. But the opportunity to win men and influence society by the proclamation of strong truth, couched in contemporary, clear, mobile words, has not departed. Our contention is well expressed by President Aubrey, of Crozer, as follows: "For the task of the ministry is in the last analysis to motivate Christian conduct, to get men and women to live their faith, once they have declared it. Here the minister becomes an educator, clarifying attitudes inciting to bold and constructive Christian living." Add to this what President Herrick of Andover Newton has to say: "You can do nothing better for yourself than to see Jesus, and you can do nothing better for others than have them see Jesus." Here we have the stressing of the sermon as a practical medium for spreading the Christian movement—and there is no gainsaying its importance.

An examination of the motives that send men to church on Sunday, or at any other time, serves also to indicate the purpose of a "worship service." Because some who come are wounded and suffering in spirit, they must be refreshed; yet the church is not first of all a spiritual hospital. Because others are wearied with cares, they must be rested and renewed; yet the church is not a cloister. Because the lonely come, they must be given friendship and fellowship; yet the church is not a social club. Because some are driven by their sense of sin and inadequacy, they

must be aroused and pointed to their redemption; yet the church is not a reformatory. Because there are those who are ignorant in religious matters, they must be taught spiritual truth; yet the church is more than a school. In no sense is the church an escape from the pressures of life. It is more a camp for Christian crusaders, in which they train for battle, or a powerhouse generating inspired and dynamic power for its task in the world. The Christian leader is on his job when he acts as superintendent of the powerhouse, adjusting all elements of power to the end that the spirit of Christ may be manifested to the world. When he does this, the Christian minister realizes in the fullest extent possible the satisfaction of an important task well done.

Dr. Van Dusen quotes the slogan of the Oxford Conference of 1937: "Let the church be the Church." Like all slogans, this one has an alluring sound. But what does it mean? "Let the church be the Church." What is it that the church is to be if it is to be the church? Definition is demanded, and we have essayed to give that definition in our foregoing paragraphs.

This brings us to a consideration of "the corporate church" that Dr. Van Dusen discovers in the tides of Christian tradition flowing through the ages and in which he seems to have great faith. Here is the source of the religious authority, for which, he says, men are longing. Is the authority for which men pine the authority of dogmas distilled from tradition? Emphatically we believe that the centre of authority rests not in tradition or in a book or in the dicta of the churches but in the spirit of the Founder of Christianity. No less an authority than this will do today and tomorrow, and for its place in Christian thinking the modern minister must contend with all his strength.

This kind of a corporate church is viewed as leading to a new kind of "holy catholic church." This means the fusing of present Christian movements into a novel kind of universal church. And it is to be brought about by ecclesiastical efforts, that is, by organization.

The president of Union Seminary quotes Canon Barry with approval, when he writes: "In the face of the mighty drive toward Fascism, individual religion is helpless." That was written before World War II. Dr. Van Dusen writes now: "In a day of mounting totalitarianisms, how shall religion survive unless it achieve more effective corporate embodiment which can, if need be, stand over against the state and every pressure of organized coercion in defense of the life of the spirit?" An organized church, bringing to bear all the force of its mass, is the only refuge from totalitarian victory. Here is something for the editor of the *Christian Century* in his fight against secularism. But is organization the answer and mass movement the means needed by Christian leadership tomorrow?

One is reminded to advise both Canon Barry and Dr. Van Dusen of the way in which the Christian movement survived the persecutions of the Jewish hierarchy and the Roman empire, to say nothing of its victory over the ambushes of the Middle Ages and later times. The news abounds in individuals the whole world over who stood fast, lonely and alone, in the struggle which our own eyes have witnessed. Even Dr. Van Dusen reports that our men found the church there, in the jungles and islands of the far Pacific. In the last analysis, crises are always decided by individuals. Organization may help, but no corporate body is stronger than the cells that compose it. No slogan of collective security or of a corporate church can lessen the importance of the individual Christian. He must rely on himself and the spirit from above for survival.

Indeed, we note that the masters of dictatorship—Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin—relied on the idea of the cell in furthering their objectives. The nucleus of the cell is always the individual. So it is in Christianity, too. Of course there is power in teamwork, and Christians must stand together. But it is their spirit and consequent action and not organization which will win out in the end.

The corporate (totalitarian) church may not bow to a bishop, even the Bishop of Rome, and so be labelled "Protestant"; but the twentieth century wants it not. Even Martin Luther and John Calvin and John Knox stumbled over this matter of force to secure agreement, and so they left the business of the Reformation half done. Let us not stumble over the same rock of offense.

When he talks about the World Council of Churches, Dr. Van Dusen is on surer ground than anywhere else in his article. It does hold promise for tomorrow. Yet there are hazards here also. One fears that it will not be easy to reconcile the high-church idea of historical succession and other notions of what makes a minister with the position of the nonconformist churches. Can the churches built on a creedal basis be brought to admit the right of private judgment in the interpretation of truth? To some that right is unalienable. Sacramentarianism is sure to collide with the interpretation of the ordinances held by Baptists and others. State-supported churches may be persuaded to live peaceably with the free churches, but it will not be without a struggle. There seems to be just one way to transcend these differences, and we devoutly hope it will be followed.

The Episcopal rector in our town was a chaplain in the U. S. Navy for about five years. On his return he said to a union meeting of the members of the other churches in the community: "Five years ago I would have regarded you all, except the Episcopalians, as pagans. But I

have been with Methodist boys, Baptist boys, and boys of all the churches, and have heard them pray and have been with them in times of the greatest peril. There is no difference between them. They pray to the same God and show the same traits of courage." There you have it. Let the World Council of Churches set up as its only test of faith the belief in the Father God and then call the churches to common action in cleaning up the mess of the *status quo,* and we will have something.

It will take more than a common peril to produce the necessary result. There must be devotion to the Supreme Person and the assumption of a task that will not permit time for debate; then we will get along. An indication of this is to be seen in the measures for world relief undertaken by the churches in common. That way lies success. Give us a project, and we will face up to it along all the line. Denominationalism will be forgotten; and the church will be one, but not uniform, in carrying out its mandate. All hail, the World Council of Churches.

If the reader has had patience enough to read this screed so far, he may be inclined to say that the writer and not Dr. Van Dusen is the reactionary. Well, you are entitled to your opinion. Believe me, I want to see the Christian movement move on to its appropriate triumph. This can only be as we carefully watch our step. I have tried to point out some things in present thinking, of which Dr. Van Dusen's article is a fair sample, which I believe we are in danger of tripping over.

Simple, direct, unembellished Christian action is what, I believe, Christian Leadership should offer today and tomorrow to this weary and confused world.

PARABLES AND COMPARISONS IN THE KORAN[1]

PINCHAS WECHTER
Gratz College

THE KORAN reflects the struggles and triumphs of Mohammed, mirrors the agonies he experienced during the early period of his prophetic activity, and records the hope and despair that alternately buoyed and dejected the struggling prophet. Weak and timorous he was at first, vacillating between belief and doubt in the divine origin of his message. During the three-year interval, that elapsed between his first revelation and his appearance as a public preacher, he more than once contemplated suicide.[2] Sharing the popular belief of his time that the inspired person—whether poet (*shā'ir*), or soothsayer (*kāhin*)—was in league with a spirit from whom he received his inspiration, Mohammed was tormented by fear of being possessed by such a spirit and thus of drawing his own inspiration from the very same source as that of the much vilified pre-Islamic poets so violently assailed by him in the Koran.[3] Partly to overcome this fear, he never tired of drawing a sharp line of demarcation between them and himself: he, the divinely inspired prophet could have nothing in common with poets and soothsayers who owed their inspiration to demons and who gloried in pagan practices which he was striving to abolish.[4]

Instead, every utterance of his is divinely inspired, delivered to him by Gabriel from the lower heavens, whither it was brought from the heavenly

[1] The selection of material for this article was primarily determined by the possibility of finding biblical or postbiblical equivalents to some koranic parables and comparisons. It does not claim to be exhaustive; many more can undoubtedly be discovered. The rather limited literature, in Western languages, on the figurative speech of the Koran follows: a) "The Parables in the Qoran," by Hartwig Hirschfeld in his *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qoran*, (London, 1902), pp. 79-101; b) "Ueber Vergleichungen und Gleichnisse im Qur'ān," by Fr. Buhl in *Acta Orientalia*, II, (Leiden, 1924), pp. 1-14; c) "Metaphern und Vergleiche im Koran," by Moses Sister in *Mitteilungen des Seminars fuer orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin*, XXXIV (1931), pp. 104-54; and d) *La Metaphore dans le Coran*, by T. Sabbagh, (Paris, 1943). In addition to my own collection of koranic parables and comparisons I have also utilized the studies mentioned above. The koranic passages are cited from J. M. Rodwell's translation. In the indication of the koranic verses I have followed both the order of the native editions (citing it first) and that of Gustavus Fluegel. Thus "Sura 2: 26(24)" means the second sura, verse 26 according to the native order but verse 24 in Fluegel. Readers who make use of Rodwell's edition (where the suras are arranged "in chronological order") will be able to make the necessary transformations by the use of his table "Index to the Suras." In this essay the spellings familiar to English readers are employed: Mohammed, Koran, Moslem. Many scholars, especially Arabic and Continental, prefer Muhammad, Qurān, Muslim. In direct quotation and reference individual usage is reproduced.

[2] See Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-ḥiyāl*, §16—*bāb at-ta'bīr;* quoted by Noeldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, I, p. 84.

[3] Sura 26: 224-226.

[4] See Sura 36: 69, where God declares that he did not teach Mohammed the art of poetry; 52: 29; 68: 2; 81: 22, where Mohammed insists that he is neither soothsayer nor possessed by jinn (*majnūn*); and 69: 41-42, where he swears that the Koran is not the word of a poet nor of a soothsayer. To remove the remotest possibility of comparing the Koran with poetry, Moslem theologians scrupulously insist on distinct terminology for koranic and poetic verses, naming the former *fawāṣil* (sing. *fāṣilatun*), and the latter *qawāfin* (sing. *qāfiyatun*). See *Itqān, naw'* 59.

table, and represents the actual and literal and uncreated word of God. When goaded by the frivolous and unbelieving Meccans to produce a miracle in support of his alleged divine warrant, he points to the very Koran he preaches as the most sublime miracle ever vouchsafed to man. "Say: Verily, were men and Djinn assembled to produce the like of this Koran, they could not produce its like, though the one should help the other."[5]

This verse was to be of great consequence: it gave rise to the doctrine of the inimitability of the Koran. Moslem theologians of a later age, keenly aware of the figurative speech with which the Koran abounds, declared that neither in style nor in contents was the Koran ever excelled or even equaled.

It is the opinion of Noeldeke that "Muhammad's single aim in the Meccan suras is to convert the people, by persuading them from their false gods to the belief in monotheism. To whatsoever point he directs his discourse, this remains paramount with him. However, instead of seeking to convince the reason of his listeners by logical proofs, he employs the arts of rhetoric to influence their minds through the imagination."[6] Among these various "arts of rhetoric" extensively and forcefully employed by Mohammed, parables and comparisons are of paramount and outstanding significance.

Mohammed, however, was by no means the first to realize the potency of rhetoric. Figurative speech has long since been recognized as an apt and convenient vehicle for the transmission of thoughts and ideas. The aptness of the parable for moral and religious instruction was well known to the ancients: to Aristotle it was one of the means of persuasion;[7] the Hebrew prophets, keenly interested to impress their divine messages upon the hearts of their hearers, successfully employed it;[8] the New Testament bears eloquent testimony to the widespread method of teaching by means of the parable, that was current in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era;[9] Midrash and Talmud abound in innumerable parables whose purpose is to instruct and illustrate.[10] The great Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages, Maimonides, ascribes great importance to the efficacy of figurative speech in teaching esoteric knowledge. After indicating the difficulties[11] attendant

[5] Sura 17: 90.

[6] See Noeldeke, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 70 ff.

[7] *Rhetoric* ii, 20.

[8] Cf. Hos. 12: 10, "And by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes," and Ezek. 17: 2; 21: 5. See also *Mishnē Tōrāh, Sēfer ham-mada'* I, 7: 3.

[9] *Cf.* Matt. 13: 34-35. See P. Fiebig, *Altjuedische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu,* (Tuebingen, 1904); A. Juelicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu,* (Tuebingen, 1910); P. Fiebig, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesus im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters,* (Tuebingen, 1912); and L. E. Browne, *The Parables of the Gospels in the Light of Modern Criticism,* (Cambridge, 1913).

[10] The composition of many fables and parables is by tradition ascribed to King Solomon (based on I Kings 4: 32). See Cant. R. 1: 8; *cf.* also B. 'Erubin 21b (end).

[11] Maimonides mentions two great obstacles: man's natural inclination to sensual pleasure, and his tendency to cling to old-established habits.

upon the acquisition of such knowledge, and classifying the various ways of its acquisition, he gives advice as the most efficient method of instruction. "Know," he counsels, "that a person after having attained a certain degree of perfection wishes to impart to others . . . any portion of the knowledge acquired by him of these subjects, he is utterly unable to be as systematic and explicit as he could be in a science the method of which is well known. . . . For this reason, great theological scholars gave instruction in all such matters by means of metaphors and allegories."[12]

The Koran enumerates the following purposes of the parable: To convey the truth to believers and mislead the transgressors,[13] to induce mankind to reflect,[14] and to serve as warning.[15] Only the wise fully understand the implication of a parable and derive full benefit from the lesson it imparts.[16]

Moslem theologians attach great importance to the parable. A tradition traced to Mohammed and cited by as-Suyūṭī (A.D. 1445-1505) declares the parable to have been one of the five ways in which the Koran had been revealed: "the lawful (*ḥalāl*), the forbidden (*ḥarām*), the perspicuous (*al-muḥkam*), the ambiguous (*al-mutashābih*), and the parable (*al-mathal*). Observe the lawful, avoid the forbidden, follow the perspicuous, implicitly believe in the ambiguous, and ponder the parables."[17] Among the various accomplishments required by ash-Shafi'ī[18] of the *mujtahid* (the independent investigator of Moslem canon law[19]) is a thorough understanding of the koranic parables. Al-Māwardī (d. A.D. 1085) was of the opinion that of all the sciences of the Koran the most important is the knowledge of its parables, a science neglected by most people "since though preoccupied with the parables they miss their applications, and a parable without its application is like a horse without bridle, and a camel without halter."[20] Al-Baidāwī (d. A.D. 1286) considers the parable "as making the most lasting impression upon the heart, and constitutes the most efficacious method of subduing a contentious antagonist, since it has the advantage of depicting the fanciful as real, and the abstract as concrete."[21]

[12] See *Dalālah al-Ḥā'irīn*, ed. Munk, I, 4b. For English translation see M. Friedlander, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, 2nd ed., (seventh impression), p. 4.

[13] Sura 2: 26(24).

[14] Sura 59: 21.

[15] Sura 14: 25(30); 39: 27(28).

[16] Sura 29: 43(42).

[17] *Itqān, naw.* 66 (beginning).

[18] Died A.H. 241. He was the founder of one of the four great schools of Moslem law.

[19] In contradistinction to the *muqallid*, bound by the decisions of one of the four Islamic schools, the *mujtahid* is allowed to decide religious matters independently, a privilege enjoyed only by the great Moslem theologians living within the first three centuries of Islam.

[20] *Itqān, loc. cit.*

[21] See his commentary on Sura 2: 17(16).

SOME KORANIC PARABLES

The parable is defined as signifying similarity between two different objects placed alongside one another for the purpose of comparison. Bishop Lowth in his monumental work, *The Poetry of the Hebrews,* enumerates the following three principal characteristics of the parable: "that it ought to be formed from an apt and well-known image, the signification of which is obvious and definite . . . that its parts and adjuncts be perspicuous, and conduce to the main object; that it be consistent, and must not confound the literal and figurative meaning."[22] Not all the koranic parables meet these rigid qualifications.

1. *Parables drawn from Natural Phenomena*

The tempest. They who refused to believe in Mohammed's prophetic mission are "like *those who, when there cometh* a stormcloud out of the Heaven, big with darkness thunder and lightning, thrust their fingers into their ears because of the thunder-clap, for fear of death!"[23] The Arabs are here compared to a people caught in a thunderstorm, a phenomenon well familiar to all of them. The thunderstorm signifies prophecy, which, like the tempest, exhibits elemental force. Its function is to uproot and to cleanse. Some Moslem theologians construe the tempest to represent the Koran itself, which, like a storm, upset the calm and self-indulgent ways of the pre-Islamic period. The thunder represents the threats contained in the Koran; the lightning, the promises; and the darkness, the mysteries.

The rain. The rain quickening the dry parched land is symbolic of resurrection, to which the Arabs refused to give credence.[24] "And among His signs *is this,* that thou seest the earth drooping: but, when we send down the rain upon it, it is stirred and swelleth; verily He who giveth it life, will surely give life to the dead."[25] It is of great interest that in Jewish liturgy the prayer for the resurrection of the dead is preceded by the mention of the fact that God causes the winds to blow and the rains to come down,[26] the proximity of which is explained as an indication that just as God is able to bring down rains, even so will he bring about the resurrection of the dead.[27]

Transitoriness of life. The same natural phenomenon, however, serves also to indicate the transitory nature of life and of all of its manifestations. "Verily, this present life is like the water which we send down from Heaven, and the produce of the earth . . . is mingled with it, till the earth

[22] See Lecture X (beginning).
[23] Sura 2: 18-19.
[24] Sura 17: 49-51(51-52); 32: 10(9); 34: 7; 50: 3, 15(14).
[25] Sura 41: 39.
[26] See Singer, *The Authorized Prayer Book,* p. 44.
[27] See B. Berākōt 33a. and Ta'anīt 1a.

hath received its golden raiment, and is decked out: and they who dwell on it deem that they have power over it! *but*, Our behest cometh to it by night or by day, and we make it as if it had been mown, as if it had not teemed only yesterday!"[28] The multiplying of riches is also compared to "the plants which spring up after rain—Their growth rejoiceth the husbandman; then they wither away, and thou seest them all yellow; then they become stubble."[29]

The wind. The alms which the infidels bestow in this life are "like a freezing wind, which falleth upon and destroyeth the cornfields of a people who have been to themselves unjust."[30]

Vapor in a plain. The glowing sandy plain in hot countries at a distance has the appearance of water. Very often the thirsty traveler is tempted by it only to be deceived when coming near, since it either goes forward—always appearing at the same distance—or vanishes altogether. The works of the infidels are compared to such vapor (*sarāb*)[31] "which the thirsty dreameth to be water, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it not aught."[32] In the Old Testament we read how Jeremiah pleadingly asks of God: "Wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?"[33]

Fire. They who refuse to acknowledge Mohammed's divine warrant are like a person "who kindleth a fire, and when it hath thrown its light on all around him [shuts his eyes] . . . . God taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness—they cannot see!"[34] This parable is intended to rebuke the unbelieving Arabs, who though waiting for a prophet of their own to address them in their own tongue, yet at the appearance of Mohammed disavowed his divine mission.

Light. "God is the LIGHT of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp—the lamp encased in glass—the glass, as it were, a glistening star. From a blessed tree is it lighted . . . whose oil would well nigh shine out, even though fire touched it not! It is light upon light."[35] This parable serves to illustrate the illuminating power of God and of religion. But not only the Koran is so designated, but also the torah and the gospel. Thus we read: "Verily, we have sent down the law (Towrat) wherein are guidance and light,"[36] and "Who sent down the Book which Moses brought, a light and guidance to man?[37] Similarly, the

[28] Sura 10: 24(25).
[29] Sura 57: 20(19).
[30] Sura 3: 117(113).
[31] Its Hebrew equivalent (*shārāb*) is found in Isa. 35: 7 and 49: 10.
[32] Sura 24: 39.
[33] Jer. 15: 18.
[34] Sura 2: 17(16).
[35] Sura 24: 35.
[36] Sura 5: 44(48).
[37] Sura 6: 91.

"Evangel [given] to Jesus, the son of Mary" is "guidance and light, confirmatory of the preceding Law.[38]

Darkness. The works of the infidels are "like the darkness on the deep sea when covered by billows riding upon billows, above which are clouds: darkness upon darkness."[39] It is of interest that the verse "Thy judgments are a great deep" (Psalm 36:6) is in Midrash Tanḥūma,[40] Noah, §8, interpreted to refer to the deeds of the wicked: "just as the deep is dark, even so are the deeds of the wicked dark, as it is said: 'And their works are in the dark'" (Isa. 29:15).

Ashes. The works of those who believe not in God "are like ashes which the wind scattereth on a stormy day: no advantage shall they gain from their works."[41]

Scum. Scum symbolizes falsehood which vanishes, in contradistinction to the purified metals that symbolize the truth which abides forever. "He sendeth down the rain from heaven: then flow the torrents in their due measure, and the flood beareth along a swelling foam. And from the *metals* which are molten in the fire for the sake of ornaments or utensils, a like scum ariseth. In this way doth God depict (set forth) truth and falsehood. As to the foam, it is quickly gone: and as to what is useful to man, it remaineth on the earth."[42] The smelting of metals as the symbol of separating the evil from the good is a figure well known in the Bible; for example: "The bellows blow fiercely; the lead is consumed of the fire. . . . Refuse silver shall men call them" (Jer. 6:29-30).

Rock. The unfruitfulness of the bare rock represents the futility of charity practiced for the sake of being seen of men. "The likeness of such an one is that of a rock with a thin soil upon it, on which a heavy rain falleth but leaveth it hard: No profit from their works shall they be able to gain."[43] In the Mishnah[44] we read that the temple contained a chamber where secret donations were deposited, and in Matt. 6:1-4 it is enjoined: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them."

A grain of corn. But they who expend their substance for the cause of God are like "a grain of corn which produceth seven ears, and in each ear a hundred grains; and God will multiply to whom He pleaseth."[45]

A garden on a hill. Those who spend their wealth wishing to please

[38] Sura 5:46(50).

[39] Sura 24:40.

[40] Buber's ed.

[41] Sura 14:18(21). Ashes, though primarily symbolic of mourning and distress, also denote worthlessness and frailty of existence. Thus Abraham alludes to himself as being "but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27), and Job ridicules the wisdom of his friends by calling it "ashes" (Job 13:12).

[42] Sura 13:17(18).

[43] Sura 2:264(266).

[44] Sheqālīm 5:6.

[45] Sura 2:261(263); cf. also Mark 4:5.

God and to strengthen their own souls are compared to "a garden on a hill, on which the heavy rain falleth, and it yieldeth its fruits twofold."[46]

The sea. The sea serves as a symbol of the infinite nature of God and the utter inability of man ever to recount all of his glory. "Say: Should the sea become ink, to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely fail ere the words of my Lord would fail, though we brought its like in aid."[47] This figure of speech was already used by R. Eliezer and R. Joshua (beginning of the second century C.E.) in describing the vastness of their knowledge, which nevertheless was as a drop in the sea. "R. Eliezer says, 'Were all the seas ink, all the reeds pens, heaven and earth scrolls, and all men scribes, they would not suffice to record the Torah which I studied. Yet, even I diminished it only as one dipping the tip of a painter's brush into the sea."[48] The same figure of speech was in a later age utilized by the author of the Aramaic hymn (*Aqdōmūt*), chanted on the first day of Pentecost before the reading of the torah: "Were the sky of parchment made, A quill each reed, each twig and blade, Could we with ink the oceans fill, Were every man a scribe of skill, The marvelous story of God's great glory Would still remain untold."[49]

The brink of an undermined bank. Those who foment strife between the believers are contrasted with those who endeavor to compose their differences. "Which of the two is best? He who hath founded his building on the fear of God and the desire to please Him, or he who hath founded his building on the brink of an undermined bank washed away by torrents, so that it rusheth with him into the fire of Hell?"[50] Every reader will recall another contrast: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."[51]

2. *The Animal World*

The dog. This animal does not serve as an example of faithfulness

[46] Sura 2: 265(267).

[47] Sura 18: 109.

[48] Cant. R. 1: 20.

[49] See *Prayers of Israel* (Jacob Bosniak), II, p. 169.

[50] Sura 9: 109(110). This reference is to the Banū Ghanam b. 'Awf who built a mosque to prevent Mohammed's followers from participating in the expedition of Tabūc. See al-Baidāwī, *ad loc.*

[51] Matt. 7: 24-27.

but of vileness. "Recite to them the history of him[52] to whom we vouchsafed our signs, and who departed from them, so that Satan followed him, and he became one of the seduced. Had we pleased, we had certainly thereby exalted him; but he crouched to the earth and followed his own lust: his likeness, therefore, is as that of the dog which lolls out his tongue, whether thou chase him away, or leave him alone! Such is the likeness of those who treat our signs as lies.[53] With this may be compared many passages in the Old Testament: David's reference to himself when pleading with Saul: "After whom is the king of Israel come out . . . after a dead dog?"[54] Abner's indignant reply when rebuked by Ish-bosheth for intimacy with Saul's concubine: "Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah?"[55] Mephibosheth's gratefulness when informed by King David of his intention to retain him as one of the members of his household: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?"[56] Hazael's astonished reply to Elisha on having been told by him of the atrocities he will commit against Israel upon ascending the throne of Damascus: "But what is thy servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?"[57] And finally, Job's contempt for some of his detractors whose fathers he disdained to set with the dogs of his flocks.[58]

The camel. To those who declare the signs of God to be false, turning away from them with disdain, "Heaven's gates shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise, until the camel passes through the eye of the needle."[59] With this is to be compared: "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[60] In the Talmud the elephant is substituted for the camel. Thus we read: "Man is shown in his dreams neither palms of gold, nor elephants passing through the eye of a needle,"[61] *i.e.*, "things he is neither used to see, nor thinks about" (Rashi); or "Perhaps thou art from the city of Pumbeditha whose inhabitants can make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle?"[62] *i.e.*, prove the impossible by tortuous, casuistic arguments.

The ewe. Nathan's parable of the rich man slaughtering the poor man's

[52] Various persons have been suggested: Balaam (see Numb. 22: 2-24: 25, the poet 'Ummayah Ibn aṣ-Ṣalt, who because of jealousy refused to acknowledge that Mohammed was a divinely sent prophet, and others.

[53] Sura 7: 176(175).

[54] I Sam. 24: 14.

[55] II Sam. 3: 8.

[56] II Sam. 9: 8.

[57] II Kings 8: 13.

[58] Job. 30: 1.

[59] Sura 7: 40(38).

[60] Matt. 19: 24; *cf.* Mark 10: 25 and Luke 18: 25.

[61] B. Berākōt 55b.

[62] B. Bābā Meṣī'ā 38b.

single ewe to prepare a meal for the wayfarer[63] is retold in the Koran.[64] Two angels, disguised as brothers, come to David with the plea that he decide between them: the oldest possesses ninety-nine ewes, and yet insists that the younger brother submit to him for safekeeping his only ewe. After pronouncing judgment in favor of the younger brother, David perceived that the purpose of the parable was to condemn his own sin against Uriah the Hittite.

3. *Insects*

The fly. "O men! a parable is set forth to you, wherefore hearken to it. Verily, they on whom ye call beside God, cannot create a fly, though they assembled for it; and if the fly carry off aught from them, they cannot take it away from it! Weak the suppliant and the supplicated!"[65] According to some Arab commentators[66] this refers to the practice of the pagan Arabs to anoint their idols with sweet-smelling substances and with honey, some of which the flies would eat. This would occur in spite of the fact that the doors of the temples were shut, the flies entering through the windows or through the crevices in the walls. In the Mishnah[67] we read that one of the ten miracles distinguishing the temple service was that "never was a fly seen in the slaughtering place," indicative of divine protection, and in contrast to the slaughtering places of idolaters that swarmed with flies.

The gnat. "Verily God is not ashamed to set forth as well the instance of a gnat as of any nobler object."[68] This was said to meet the objection of the Arabs that the Koran could not claim divine inspiration since it makes mention of such insects as the ant, the bee, spider, fly, and locusts.[69]

The spider. Those who rely on others instead of God are like the spider who buildeth her house: "But verily, frailest of all houses is the house of the spider."[70] Also in the Bible the spider's web suggests frailty and instability. Thus Deutero-Isaiah declares that those whose hands are defiled with blood, and who trust in vanity, "hatch basilisks' eggs, and weave the spider's web,"[71] and the opinion of Bildad is that the confidence of the godless is gossamer and his trust is a spider's web.[72]

[63] II Sam. 12: 1-6.

[64] Sura 38: 21-24(20-23).

[65] Sura 22: 73(72). With the last phrase compare Isa. 31: 3—"Both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall."

[66] So al-Beidāwī and az-Zamakhsharī, *ad loc.*

[67] See Abōth 5: 5.

[68] Sura 2: 26(24).

[69] Thus Suras 16, 27, 29 are named: "The Bee," "The Ant," and "The Spider," respectively.

[70] Sura 29: 41(40).

[71] Isa. 59: 5.

[72] Job 8: 14.

4. *Plant Life.*

A seed. Mohammed's companions, "vehement against the infidels, but full of tenderness among themselves," are thus described in "the Evangel" (*wa-mathalahum fī-'l-'injīli*): "They are as the seed which putteth forth its stalk; then strengtheneth it, and it groweth stout, and riseth upon its stem, rejoicing the husbandman."[73] This allusion is to Mark 4: 26-28, where the kingdom of God is compared to a seed cast in the ground: "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

A grain of mustard. This represents the smallest quantity. On the day of resurrection absolute justice will be meted out to every one: just balances will God set up, and no soul shall be wronged. "Though, were a work but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, we would bring it forth *to be weighed.*"[74] Of great interest is, of course, the parable found in the New Testament, where the kingdom of heaven is compared to "a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth," but upon growing up "becometh greater than all herbs . . . so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.[75]

A tree. A good word is likened "To a good tree: its root firmly fixed, and its branches in the Heaven: Yielding its fruit in all seasons."[76] With this compare the description of the righteous man who puts his trust in God "as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but its foliage shall be luxuriant . . . neither shall cease from yielding fruit;"[77] and "he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf doth not wither."[78]

The two gardens. The wealthy unbeliever, boastful of his wealth, is contrasted with the poor but believing companion. "And set forth to them as a parable two men; on one of whom we bestowed two gardens of grape vines, and surrounded both with palm trees, and placed corn fields between them: Each of the gardens did yield its fruit, and failed not thereof at all . . . And this man received its fruit, and said, disputing with him, to his companion, 'More have I than thou of wealth, and my family is mightier.' "[79] He arrogantly asserted that his wealth would abide with him forever. The poor but believing companion upbraided him for his disavowal of God, the

[73] Sura 48: 29.

[74] Sura 21: 47(48).

[75] Mark 4: 31-32; *cf.* Luke 13: 19 and also Luke 17: 6—"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

[76] Sura 14: 24-25(29-30).

[77] Jer. 17: 7-9.

[78] Psalm 1: 3.

[79] Sura 18: 32-34(31-32).

bestower of all wordly goods, and warned him of impending destruction that would overtake all of his wordly possession. When destruction did come, the rich and arrogant infidel began to wring his hands, "for its vines were falling down on their trellises, and he said, 'Oh that I had not joined any other god to my Lord.' "[80]

5. *Social Life*

Slavery. Idols are compared to slaves who possess no property of their own. Instead, they are in the possession of others. God, however, is compared to a bountiful person, who provides the needs of his own family and assists also others in their needs. "God maketh comparison between a slave the property of his lord, who hath no power over anything, and *a free* man whom we have ourselves supplied with goodly supplies, and who giveth alms therefrom both in secret and openly.[81] Idols are compared to slaves that are blind and dumb, thus becoming a burden to their masters; whereas God is compared to one thoroughly qualified to execute his undertakings. With this may be compared Jer. 10:3-5; Isa. 44:9-21; and Psalm 115:3-7.

The ungrateful city. "God proposeth the instance of a city, secure and at ease, to which its supplies come in plenty from every side. But she was thankless for the boons of God; God therefore made her taste the woe of famine and of fear, for what they had done. Moreover, an apostle of their own people came to them, and they treated him as an impostor. So chastisement overtook them because they were evil doers."[82] This parable, though generally applied to every city refusing to be thankful for the bounties bestowed upon it by God, refers particularly to Mecca, whose inhabitants enjoyed great prosperity and security but refused to acknowledge that these came from God; and when Mohammed appeared, calling upon them to renounce their idolatrous practices, they laughed him to scorn and refused to believe in his prophetic mission. "No prophet is accepted in his own country" was an adage current also in Palestine.[83]

SOME KORANIC COMPARISONS[84]

1. *Drawn from Nature*

Heaven and earth—to indicate duration of time. "Therein (*i.e.*, in the Fire) shall they abide while the Heavens and the Earth shall last."[85]

[80] Sura 18:42(40).
[81] Sura 16:75(77).
[82] Sura 16:112(113).
[83] *Cf.* Luke 4:24; John 7:52.
[84] According to Lowth (*op. cit.*, Lecture XII) the purpose of a comparison is threefold: illustration, which is best served by a simile familiar and understood by all; amplification, requiring that "objects which furnish the similes should be beautiful, magnificent or splendid"; and variety to entertain the reader.
[85] Sura 11:107(109). The same length of time will the righteous spend in Paradise; *cf.* Sura 11:108(110).

A similar comparison is found also in the Bible. Thus, the reward of those who will observe the commandments will be as long a life "as the days of the heavens above the earth;"[86] Israel's seed and name will endure as long "as the heavens and the new earth remain";[87] the sanctuary God built is "like the earth which he hath founded forever";[88] and the throne of David will endure "as the days of the heaven."[89]

Clouds—to denote the quick passing of a thing and its impermanence. "And thou shalt see the mountains, which thou thinkest so firm, pass away with the passing of a cloud!"[90] Similar comparisons are found also in the Bible. Thus, Israel's transgression is blotted out as quickly as the passing of "a thick cloud";[91] the exiles returning to Zion "fly as a cloud";[92] the goodness of Ephraim and Judah endures "as a morning cloud";[93] Job's welfare fleetingly "passed away as a cloud";[94] and the similitude of seducers is that of "clouds that are carried with the tempest,"[95] which is indicative of the inconstancy of their corrupt nature.

Stone—to indicate hardness of heart. "Then . . . your hearts became hard like rocks, or harder still."[96] With this may be compared: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."[97]

2. Insects

Locusts—to indicate large numbers. On the day of resurrection mankind "will come forth from their graves, as if they were scattered locusts."[97a] Compare with this also "And they (*sc.* the Midianites) came in as locusts for multitude"[98] and "Make thyself many as the locusts."[99]

3. *Animals*

The donkey. Its voice is the most disagreeable. "And lower thy voice: for the least pleasing of voices is surely the voice of asses."[100] They who

[86] Deut. 11: 21.
[87] Isa. 66: 22.
[88] Psalm 78: 69.
[89] Psalm 89: 29.
[90] Sura 27: 88(90).
[91] Isa. 44: 22.
[92] Isa. 60: 8.
[93] Hos. 6: 4.
[94] Job. 30: 15.
[95] II Pet. 2: 17.
[96] Sura 2: 74(69).
[97] Ezek. 36: 26.
[97a] Sura 54: 7.
[98] Judg. 6: 5.
[99] Nahum 3: 15.
[100] Sura 31: 19(18).

refuse to bear the burden of the law laid upon them "are like an ass beneath a load of books,"[101] and those who obstinately turn away from the warning of the Koran are "as affrighted asses fleeing from a lion."[102]

4. *Plant Life*

The palm. This tree is the most frequently mentioned in the Koran. The uprooting of the palm and its hollowness were to Mohammed a symbol of the dire destruction visited upon nations of antiquity—such as the tribes of Ad and Thamūd—as punishment for their recalcitrancy and their denial of the prophets sent to them. Mohammed never tires of recounting the fate that overtook disobedient peoples. This he does with the purpose of impressing upon the minds of the Meccans that a similar fate awaits them if they will persist in rejecting him as their prophet. Thus, against the Adites, who refused to obey their prophet Hūd, "We sent . . . a roaring wind in a day of continued distress: It tore men away as though they were uprooted palm stumps.[103]

A crooked palm branch. Among the great wonders of nature, all testifying to the existence of God, is the moon, for which "We have decreed stations . . . till it change like an old and crooked palm branch."[104]

The date stone—to denote the insignificant. "Shall they have a share in the kingdom who would not bestow on their fellow men even the speck in a date stone?"[105] "But the gods whom ye call on beside Him have no power over the husk of a date stone!"[106] The righteous believers will enter Paradise and "they shall not be wronged the skin of a date stone."[107]

5. *The Human Body*

Flesh. Slander is compared to eating the flesh of the slandered person. "O Believers! . . . neither let the one of you traduce another in his absence. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely ye would loathe it."[108] The same appellation for slander is found also in the Bible. Thus, when Dan. 3:8 states that certain Chaldeans came to Nebuchadnezzar and brought accusation against the Jews for refusing to bow down to the golden image, the Aramaic text reads: wa-'akalū qarṣēhōn dī yehūdāyē, *i.e.*, they ate the flesh of the Jews.[109]

[101] Sura 62:5. An accusation against the Jews for their inability to understand the alleged prophecies in the Torah foretelling the coming of Mohammed.

[102] Sura 74:50-51.

[103] Sura 54:19.

[104] Sura 36:39.

[105] Sura 4:53(56).

[106] Sura 35:13(14).

[107] Sura 4:123.

[108] Sura 49:12.

[109] *Cf.* also Dan. 6:25 and Targum Onkelos on Lev. 19:16—*la tekul kurzin, i.e.,* thou shalt not eat flesh. See, however, Job 19:22; 31:31.

Back. To throw behind one's back is to turn away from. "And when there came to them an apostle from God, affirming the previous revelations made to them, some of those to whom the Scriptures were given, threw the Book of God behind their backs as if they knew it not."[110] With this compare Ahijah's dire prophecy against the house of Jeroboam for worshiping "other gods and molten images" and casting the God of Israel behind the back;[111] Ezekiel's threatened punishment of Oholibah (Jerusalem) for forgetting God and casting him behind her back;[112] and Nehemiah's disapproval of the generation, which, in spite of the bounties and favors bestowed upon them by God, cast his "law behind their backs."[113]

The jugular vein—denoting God's complete knowledge of whatever transpires in the innermost recesses of man's heart. "We created man, and we know what his soul whispereth to him; and we are closer to him than his neck-vein."[114]

Heart. An uncircumcised heart signifies a person who is unable to distinguish between what is good and what is evil. Those who rejected the signs of God justified themselves by saying, "Uncircumcised are our hearts."[115] The same figure is found in the biblical expressions: "If then perchance their uncircumcised heart be humbled,"[116] and "uncircumcised in heart."[117]

6. *Division of Time*

The day (*al-Yawm*). The plural of this noun indicates both victories and reverses. "We alternate these days *of successes and reverses* among men, that God may know those who have believed."[118] The expression *Ayyām allāh* (the "days of Allah") indicate divine chastisement of godless generations[119] and are reminiscent of the biblical conception of the "day of the Lord."[120]

The year. "And they will bid thee to hasten the chastisement. But God cannot fail His threat. And verily, a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years, as ye reckon them."[121] All mankind will return to God

[110] Sura 2: 101(95).

[111] See I Kings 14: 9.

[112] Ezek. 23: 35.

[113] Neh. 9: 26.

[114] Sura 50: 16(15).

[115] Sura 2: 88(82); 4: 155(154).

[116] Lev. 26: 41.

[117] Jer. 9: 25; Ezek. 44: 7, 9.

[118] Sura 3: 140(134).

[119] *Cf.* Sura 14: 5.

[120] *Cf.* Isa. 13: 6, 9; Joel 1: 15; 2: 1-2, 11; 3: 14; Amos 5: 18-20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1: 14-18; Zech. 14: 1 ff.; Mal. 4: 5.

[121] Sura 22: 47(46).

"on a day whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon."[122] Here, too, is a phrase familiar from the Old Testament: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past."[123]

We have seen that Mohammed, like the prophets of old, and like Jesus of Nazareth, made ample use of figurative speech with the purpose of illustrating and bringing into focus the moral lessons he felt called upon to impart to his Arabian people, and through them, as he thought, to the entire world. His parables and comparisons, designed to influence the minds of his recalcitrant tribesmen through their imagination, were drawn from life around him. His figurative speech, while distinctly Arabic and faithfully mirroring his native environment, is nonetheless tinged with the spirit of Hebrew prophecy whose traces are discernible beneath the Arabic garb, and quite often displays the deep influence it exerted upon the Arabian prophet whose mission it was to transform tribes as unstable as the sands of the wastes they inhabited into a unified people conscious of its inner spiritual strength. All phenomena—whether natural or social—served only one purpose, namely, to bring to the attention of his compatriots the great lessons derived from both nature and history. While the claim to inimitability is certainly exaggerated and unwarranted, the fact cannot be denied that the Koran contains some very beautiful parables and comparisons that will be enjoyed as long as the ear of man is attuned to eloquent human speech.

[122] Sura 32: 5(4).

[123] Psalm 90: 4; *cf.* also B. Sanhedrin 97a (bottom) ff.

A DESCANT ON W. H. AUDEN'S CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

S. CARSON WASSON
Wayne Presbyterian Church

Wystan Hugh Auden was born February 21, 1907, in York, England. He was educated at Gresham's School, Holt, and at Christ Church College, Oxford. For a brief while after his university career he was a schoolteacher. Already he was developing talent for poetry, and soon he aligned himself with a small group of young poets in London who became recognized as the most promising of the new generation in English poetry. All of them were sharply turned toward the left, some being out-and-out communists. Auden, however, was never in complete agreement with communist doctrine. But he was, and has remained, in rebellion against the traditions and mores of the middle class into which he was born. During the Spanish revolution he was an ambulance driver for the Loyalists. In 1937, Auden received the King's Poetry medal, a sufficient indication of his eminence among contemporary British poets. He was then living in Birmingham, but in 1939 he came to the United States to be a permanent resident.

There has been a very pronounced development in Auden's work. It would be interesting to trace this evolution, both in the form and the content of his poetry, but such a treatment is too complex and extended for a paper of this type. In fact we are forced to limit our analysis to his last poem—and his greatest—to which we shall turn in a moment.

However, a brief paragraph or two about Auden's growth may be in order. As might be supposed from the biographical data given, he began as a rebel against things as they are; things economic, social, and political. His convictions were of the extreme left. His early poetry, therefore, consists of sharp social satire with a strong dash of cynicism. He leaned toward the Marxist interpretation of politics, history, and society. He had an unbounded sympathy for the underdog living in sodden poverty, and a mournful indignation for the ugliness of the landscape brought about by industrialization. Slums, slag piles, and rusting machinery—these were the offal cast up by the overlords who cared neither for the beauty of nature nor for the lot of the common man in their greed for wealth. In those early years he looked upon religion as an irrelevant and harmless indulgence on the part of inadequate people. With biting irony he said that cathedrals were "luxury liners laden with souls" in which one could hear "the high thin rare continuous worship of the self-absorbed." Turn-

ing from his social views, we find his early poetry dealing with personal problems and behavior in terms of Freud. Words and phrases of the Freudian jargon are abundant, and are still to be found in his most recent poetry.

When Auden published his collected poetry in 1945, he picked from his hundreds of poems only 225 which he wished to preserve. It is noteworthy that he has omitted nearly all of his earlier so-called "communist" poems. That in itself should indicate that the man has undergone a considerable change in recent years. He has, and we can describe it in a few words. His has been a transition from destructive social satire to an exploration of the inner kingdom of the spirit. Such a change is not a retreat from reality but a deeper apprehension of the truth, to use the judgment of the editor of the *Christian Century*. In other words, there are indications that Auden has swung round to the Christian position. Thus he has not lost his former concern for the improvement of social conditions, but he now sees them as symptoms of a more fundamental maladjustment. He is now convinced that the first need is a healing of the sickness of the human soul. According to Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell, in a recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Auden is now a practicing member of the Anglican wing of the Episcopal church. I presume this means he has come to affirm the Christian faith.

It is certainly clear that Auden's thinking recently has been molded by the authorities most often quoted by the neoörthodox school of theologians. In 1945, Emile Cammaerts, professor of Belgian studies of the University of London, published a little book called *The Flower of Grass*, which contains a description of his [Cammaerts'] pilgrimage from humanism to Anglican Christianity. Auden wrote the foreword and there sets down an interesting paragraph about himself. He writes:

> When I first began reading St. Augustine, Pascal and Kierkegaard, I was, naturally, impressed that minds so infinitely more acute than mine should believe the Nicene Creed. Being most unwilling to accept what would call in question my whole way of life, I looked for a way out and for one whose generation was familiar with Freud, this was easy to find, for all three had obviously neurotic temperaments, aggressive desperate natures to whom life was always a foxhole under fire, and who had good reason to hate themselves. "For them," I argued, "the Christian faith was the natural, and in their day, probably the only solution to their abnormal situation. Indeed, from what I have seen of psychoanalysis, I don't know of a better one today but we know too much about rationalization to be able to adopt it." Like so many of my generation who have been saved from many kinds of hypocrisy by the Freudian or Marxist premise that all thinking is "interested" thinking, I forgot that this rule applies just as much to denying as it does to affirming."[1]

[1] Quoted from the foreword (p. xii) to *The Flower of Grass*, by Emile Cammaerts (Harper & Brothers), by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

With these few remarks as a background, we may now turn to Auden's most recent and best poem, which he calls a "Christmas oratorio." It is entitled "For the Time Being."

This poem sets forth Auden's religious position and interpretation of life. In a sentence this seems to be: the world is a perpetual invitation to choose love as the more excellent way. That such a choice is right is validated by the Incarnation. As we would expect, the piece is made up of recitatives, arias, choruses, and parts spoken by the narrator as well as by the various characters of the Nativity scene.

The oratorio opens with antiphonals by the chorus and the semichorus. They establish the mood of quiet despair to be found throughout the pagan world at the time of the Incarnation.

> Darkness and snow descend;
> The clock on the mantelpiece
> Has nothing to recommend,
> Nor does the face in the glass
> Appear nobler than our own
> As darkness and snow descend
> On all personality.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> As winter completes an age,
> The eyes huddle like cattle, doubt
> Seeps into the pores and power
> Ebbs from the heavy signet ring;
> The prophet's lantern is out
> And gone the boundary stone,
> Cold the heart and cold the stove,
> Ice condenses on the bone:
> Winter completes an age.[2]

The lines beginning "The eyes huddle like cattle . . ." give us an illustration of one source of Auden's power, the ability to condense an idea brilliantly. He has a genius for scraping together a few random words and calling into life a whole world; in this case the decadent, world-weary futility of the Roman empire. Another of Auden's characteristics is his conversational tone, as if he were merely indulging in clever but offhand talking. He uses the casual rhythms of speech, nonchalant irony, and emphasis by understatement.

After the chorus and semichorus have spoken their pieces, the narrator takes up the theme and advances the thought a step farther. The despair permeating the ancient world was more than the feeling of life's ordinary hard blows. Such things as the usual run of "flood, fire, the

[2] These lines (pp. 407 f.), and all others in this paper, are quoted with the gracious permission of the publisher, Random House. All quotations are from *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden.*

dessication of grasslands, . . . piracy on the high seas, physical pain and fiscal grief" were "familiar tribulations," and men of every age have been able to cope with these misfortunes with a fair degree of courage. But, says the narrator, there was another element—"an outrageous novelty" had been introduced into Cæsar's world. There was a growing sense that life may be meaningless and this became intolerable (as it does for men in all ages). The narrator makes it plain that this is also a present-day sickness. Like a doleful dirge the chorus returns to reiterate this sense of the loneliness of mankind, of the absence of "a centre from which our points of definition" derive. Coupled with this is a longing for a miracle, a hope for some breaking forth from the skies which will disclose "a vibrating flame at last and entrust him forever with its magic secret of how to extemporize life."

The poem moves on now to the Annunciation. There are first of all speeches by the four faculties of man—intuition, feeling, sensation, and thought. They say in effect that they are the channel by which man may apprehend truth, but their rôle is merely to report and not interpret the meaning of life.

Now there comes a dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Mary. Gabriel announces that God the Unknown seeks to reveal himself in the known. The solo and chorus sing a song of rejoicing at the good news.

We move on to the Temptation of Joseph. It is here that we find Auden slipping into the almost flippant by his obvious imitation of Eliot's device of a sudden and jarring transition to the modern. Listen to Joseph:

> My shoes were shined, my pants were
> cleaned and pressed,
> And I was hurrying to meet
> My own true Love:
> But a great crowd grew and grew
> Till I could not push my way through,
> Because
> A star had fallen down the street;
> When they saw who I was,
> The police tried to do their best.[3]

Then the off-stage chorus speaks:

> *Joseph, you have heard*
> *What Mary says occurred;*
> *Yes, it may be so.*
> *Is it likely? No.*[4]

If I understand the scene aright, the off-stage chorus represents subcon-

[3] Pp. 421 f.
[4] P. 422.

scious suspicion gnawing at the back of Joseph's mind, even while he pretends to be unconcerned and debonair, that Mary may have violated their betrothal. At last he can no longer ignore the persuasive whispers of suspicion and seeks reassurance as to Mary's faithfulness. But Gabriel denies him the comfort of proof and admonishes him to accept by an act of faith that Mary's womb has been stirred into life by supernatural agency. In so doing he will atone for Adam's lame excuse for his fall by putting the blame on Eve, a procedure practiced by the male species even until this day. Joseph must now be the weaker, passive sex. In this passage, which is told by the narrator, Auden is at his best in his almost Debussylike impressionism and his satire.

> For the perpetual excuse
> Of Adam for his fall—"My little Eve,
> God bless her, did beguile me and I ate,"
> For his insistence on a nurse,
> All service, breast, and lap, for giving Fate
> Feminine gender to make girls believe
> That they can save him, you must now atone,
> Joseph, in silence and alone;
> While she who loves you makes you shake with fright,
> Your love for her must tuck you up and kiss good night.[5]

The passage closes with a few pointed lines which give a clue to Auden's definition of faith, as well as an example of another of the poet's artifices, the paradox.

> There is one World of Nature and one Life;
> Sin fractures the Vision, not the Fact; for
> The Exceptional is always usual
> And the Usual exceptional.
> To choose what is difficult all one's days
> As if it were easy, that is faith. . . .[6]

Following this there are parts taken by the semichorus and a boys' semichorus which are filled with the murky remnants of Auden's Freudianism, and which, in my opinion, would better be omitted.

We now pass on to the section of the oratorio called "The Summons." The wise men appear, and each states why he is following the star, which itself speaks and warns that those who follow it must discard ordinary wisdom and the accepted tenets of logic. This scene gives us the first full indication of the meaning of the title of the oratorio, "For the Time Being." The quest of life for Auden is to redeem the present from insignificance. The reflected glory of the past, still tinting the western sky with exquisite

[5] P. 424.
[6] P. 426.

but remote and insubstantial colors, is nothing more than an afterglow. It cannot vitalize a man's whole life; it is confined to the chamber of memory. The hope for the future, which gives faint streaks of dawn, does not light up the whole sky. It can do no more than illumine the eastern horizon of anticipation and still leaves a man standing in darkness. There is no gain in heaping up great stacks of yesterdays or tomorrows. Everything depends upon how the "time being" is filled. The present—how can we put meaning and zest into the now-existing with its welter of pain and anxiety, its loneliness and self-reflection which so often fall into a silent pattern speaking decisively neither for nor against faith?

This quest is given voice by the wise men. The first one speaks from the station of a scientist, patiently investigating nature to lay bare the riddle of life; or, as this magus says: "With rack and screw I put Nature through a thorough inquisition." But nature's answers are never clear-cut; in fact, says the wise man, "She is just as big a liar . . . as we are." Therefore, he says, how to achieve intellectual truthfulness dispassionately yet convincingly in dissecting the actual and the present is his quest.

The second wise man has lost faith in time's constant flow by discovering that at any given split instant, "all solids dissolve, no wheels revolve." Therefore facts are like an alternating current and have, for the observer, no inflexible endurance. (Has Auden dipped into quantum and statistical physics?) So in our mental and spiritual life we tend to anticipate or remember, but never *are*. The present is a gap, or a state of suspension; there is no continuity. His problem, then, is how to live in the existing *now*.

The third wise man takes the moral philosopher's approach and finds that the categorical imperative, the awe-inspiring "ought," will not always keep our passions philanthropic. "Ought" is too austere and ascetic a word on which to erect a life. His problem is how to be *loving* in each instant.

Now comes the decree of Cæsar, requiring all male persons over twenty-one to register at their place of birth—the occasion, of course, which drew Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. A fugal-chorus develops the theme with strident satire, that Cæsar's world represents law, order, efficiency, and progress, brooking no contrariety on the part of man, nature, or the gods. This is a brilliant piece, now so well known as "The Seven Kingdoms."

There is a swift transition as the shepherds take the stage. They represent the workers of the world. Here plainly Auden recants his early leanings toward Marxist doctrine. The particular Marxist flaw which the shepherds pounce upon is the insinuation that the individual is nothing, that only the masses count. As two of them say with considerable vehemence and penetration:

> . . . to behave like a cogwheel
> When one knows one is no such thing,
> Merely to add to a crowd with one's passionate body
> Is not a virtue.[7]

These shepherds close their conversation with a conviction that something will happen to redeem life from its monotony and insignificance. Thereupon the chorus of angels appears and announce the Nativity. The shepherds run posthaste to Bethlehem and join the wise men in proclaiming that at the manger they have at last found love incarnate; love as an immediate operation, not past or postponed; love able to rectify life and lift it from apathy and the tyranny of the material; "living love replacing phantasy." Time is not a duration, therefore, but a choice; an ever-existing choice to select love as life's apogee.

We now come to the climax of the oratorio, reached in the next two parts. The first is the Meditation of Simeon and the second is a soliloquy by Herod as he gives the order for the massacre of the innocents. Both are prose pieces, studded with alliterations (another of Auden's favorite devices).

The Meditation of Simeon is climactic because it represents Auden himself speaking out of his heart. This section of the oratorio is powerful writing. He begins by developing a theme which one at times finds in Dostoevski's stories: the natural man is never ready to abandon his tidy little closed circle of philosophy embracing a blend of automatic progress, innate goodness, and Pollyannaism until he is knocked entirely flat by the brutal facts of life. He must be deflated of every false notion of self-flattery, pushed out to the extreme edge of life where yawns at his feet the abyss of despair and contradiction, and broken of every last, fond hope of self-competency, before God can repair and control his life.

Nor could Christ appear as the God-man until men were humble, exhausted, and ready to look away from their own smoky, dim lamps of wisdom to the bright and heavenly light of God in Christ. As Auden makes Simeon say, "The Word could not be made Flesh until men had reached a state of absolute contradiction between clarity and despair in which they would have no choice but either to accept absolutely or to reject absolutely, yet in their choice there should be no element of luck, for they would be fully conscious of what they were accepting or rejecting."[8]

The Incarnation is man's salvation because we see God, "not in some prophetic vision of what might be, but with the eyes of our own weakness as to what actually is." The meaning of history is supplied a key by the Incarnation. Here again we observe Auden struggling with the

[7] P. 437.
[8] P. 451.

problem of the whole oratorio: how to redeem the present from insignificance. The birth of the Holy Child is the central point of all history and the proper value of all human lives.

Also in this meditation Auden makes Simeon treat another riddle with which he [Auden] has often scrimmaged; that is, the Greek dramatist versus the Christian interpretation of the tragic element in life. This, in essence, is the conflict of virtue with necessity. In the Greek tragedies the virtuous hero goes down under the blows of an implacable, irresistible, blind, and mechanical fate. In the Christian view of life's tragic element, an uncomprehending fate is not the central factor, but attention is focused on the hero because he is not altogether determined by an external, unyielding necessity; rather, he possesses an internal power of choice, resident in his will (and since the hero is a Christian, his will is refined and stiffened by the grace of God). Thus, no matter how disastrous the external blows of life may be, the drama hinges on how a man will choose and with what courage he will face the tragic element in life. Therefore, says Auden, "Every invalid is Roland defending the narrow pass against hopeless odds, every stenographer Brunnhilde refusing to renounce her lover's ring which came into existence through the renunciation of love."[9]

Simeon goes on to say that not only is the will of man redeemed but his reason also, by God's power and grace, and concludes his speech by affirming that because of the Incarnation, "our redemption is no longer a question of pursuit but of surrender to Him who is always and everywhere present."[10]

We now turn to Herod's soliloquy. This character represents the bewildered scientific liberal. Herod stands at a window high up in his citadel, looking out over his domain. He sees no visible disorder; "no crime—what could be more innocent than the birth of an artisan's child"? He extols the rational life as the summum bonum. The whole notion of prophecy, revelation, and divine activity annoys him. But the visit of the wise men inquiring for the newborn king has upset him more than he cares to admit. Such a thing would overturn life's sensible balance.

> Today, apparently, judging by the trio who came to see me this morning with an ecstatic grin on their scholarly faces, the job has been done. "God has been born," they cried, "we have seen him ourselves. The World is saved. Nothing else matters."
>
> One needn't be much of a psychologist to realise that if this rumour is not stamped out now, in a few years it is capable of diseasing the whole Empire, and one doesn't have to be a prophet to predict the consequences if it should.
>
> Reason will be replaced by Revelation. Instead of Rational Law, objective truths perceptible to any who will undergo the necessary intellectual discipline, and

[9] P. 452.

[10] P. 454.

the same for all, Knowledge will degenerate into a riot of subjective visions—feelings in the solar plexus induced by undernourishment, angelic images generated by fevers or drugs, dream warnings inspired by the sound of falling water. . . .

Justice will be replaced by Pity as the cardinal human virtue, and all fear of retribution will vanish. Every corner-boy will congratulate himself: "I'm such a sinner that God had to come down in person to save me. I must be a devil of a fellow." Every crook will argue: "I like committing crimes. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged."[11]

Here is some of the shrewdest, sharpest, and most satirical writing one can imagine.

Following this are short scenes which we must pass over for lack of space: conversations by the soldiers as they go about the massacre, and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt.

The narrator closes the oratorio by describing the letdown experienced in every modern family on the day after Christmas. The tree must be dismantled, the holly burned—both dismal jobs. The children must go back to school, and the family must live on meals of leftovers. During the Christmas season everybody drank too much, stayed up too late, and tried to love all of the relatives. "Once again," says the narrator, "as in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed to do more than entertain it as an agreeable possibility, once again we have sent Him away, begging though to remain His disobedient servant."[12] As we remember the first Christmas, we feel guilty and unable to forget the Bethlehem stable "where for once in our lives everything became a You and nothing was an It." Therefore, "we look around for something, no matter what, to inhibit our self-reflection, and the obvious thing for that purpose would be some great suffering."[13]

> In the meantime
> There are bills to be paid, machines to keep in repair,
> Irregular verbs to learn, the Time Being to redeem
> From insignificance. The happy morning is over,
> The night of agony still to come; the time is noon:
> When the Spirit must practise his scales of rejoicing
> Without even a hostile audience, and the Soul endure
> A silence that is neither for nor against her faith
> That God's Will will be done, that, in spite of her prayers,
> God will cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph."[14]

The last words are spoken by a chorus which supplies a strong reaffirmation of faith on the heels of the narrator's rather despairing speech. We are bidden not to be downcast by the confusing testimony of

[11] Pp. 458 f.
[12] P. 465.
[13] P. 466.
[14] P. 466.

existence but to look to him who is the way, the truth, and the life, following him through the land of unlikeness, the kingdom of anxiety, and the world of the flesh.

Auden occupies an unusually elevated niche in contemporary poetry's hall of fame. It would be unfair to say that this so because there is a dearth of good poets today. He excels because he has a talent for poetry. At times he is flippant and adolescent. Sometimes he grates on the sensibilities. He does so deliberately. He is always interesting, vigorous, and seems to enjoy himself thoroughly. He speaks with a shout and a whoop and a jeer. At moments he smirks like a schoolboy. Someone has likened him to a cowboy in the arena riding a wildly bucking broncho.

In this Christmas oratorio he has outgrown most of his cynicism and has exchanged it for a serious quest for a faith. He has progressed from a distrust of the world to a hope for it. In appraising the oratorio there is need for caution. Can it be that this new-found diligence toward matters of the spirit is a pose? Has Auden taken his place on the side of the angels because it suits his purpose? Will his next major work deride or repudiate faith just as completely as this one gropes for and upholds it? For a long time Rome was suspicious of Cardinal Newman, wondering whether his conversion was genuine. A man of Newman's abilities was capable of considerable good or harm for the cause. Some who stand within the ranks of the faithful and have a nice sense of poetry, cock an eyebrow at Mr. Auden's motives. Only time (and not the Time Being, mind you, but the Time to Come) will answer this question.

This paper fails most certainly to capture and pin down many of the more exalted flights of Auden's fancy and meaning. But I hope I have avoided the muddy and pretentious character of much contemporary discussion of poetry. Comment on poetry today has become esoterical beyond the endurance of common sense. Who knows? Perhaps there is urgent need for bumblers such as I, blundering about the enchanted palace of poetic criticism, to break the spell of gilded reconditeness. It is time somebody told the king that he is naked. The main points of Mr. Auden's oratorio are forthright. He deserves the compliment of equal clarity in any descant on his fine work.

RECONVERSION

FREDERICK R. GRIFFIN
First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia

In the south of England is an abbey, not famous, but in its history of special interest as a parable of reconversion. The English abbey suggests a church, and often a church of cathedral proportions. We think at once of Westminster. But the abbey was not a church, rather it had a church. The abbey was a civil-religious community, a small state or duchy, complete and of almost unlimited sovereignty. It was governed by an abbot or abbess, under whom were monks, lay and clerical. The territories of the abbeys varied in size; some were no larger than a Pennsylvania borough, while others were as large as one of our largest counties. The lands were used for forests, pastures, gardens, and orchards. An abbey usually operated a farm with herds and flocks and other departments of agriculture. There were also the necessary social, industrial, and religious institutions with appropriate buildings for their housing. There were dormitories for residents, school and library, hospital and hostel, barns and mills and workshops, and in the centre of all, a church. The community was self-contained and had within itself a sufficiency for its needs. It was not, however, an exclusive or cloistered community, maintained for its own monastic life, since it opened its gates and doors to all who sought them. Travelers were received at the hostel, the sick at the hospital, and children of the countryside at the school. Students came to work in the library or studio, in shops were facilities for instruction in various crafts, and on the farm for instruction in husbandry. Pilgrims, often in great numbers, came to benefit by the offices of religion in the church.

The abbeys were not of equal merit, varying in nearly every respect; but, on the whole, during their great days, they provided and achieved a very satisfactory pattern of life. Of all the many types of social and political organization, the English abbey was one of the best. Much has been written about ideal commonwealths, and attempts have been made to create such. The abbey was not an ideal commonwealth but, at its best, it came as near that as has ever been attained. It was in purpose an endeavor to establish a Christian society, and it was relatively successful. In its religious life it was superior to the churches outside and in its government more just and honest than the government of the country. But the English abbey passed away, not because of internal corruption and decay, which is the frequent cause of the mortality of institutions. It fell from pressure and hostility without. The abbeys were outlawed. Abbots, abbesses, and

monks were put to death or driven into exile. Abbey possessions were confiscated, and buildings were wholly or partly destroyed. What has happened on a greater scale in recent years in so many parts of the world happened on a smaller scale to the abbeys. Libraries were dispersed or burned, and works of art destroyed; buildings were demolished, and their stone, iron, and copper used for the making of roads, bridges, houses, stores, and barns. The churches, often superb architectural achievements, were mostly destroyed though some were spared and some only partly demolished. These last remain as the ruined abbeys of England—ruins which are sometimes of incomparable beauty and majesty. Most serious of all was the dissolution and loss of the societies: the end of the holy experiment. "Our little systems have their day, they have their day and cease to be." In like manner we may say the abbeys had their day, they had their day and ceased to be.

In the south of England is Buckfast, one of these abbeys. Little has been recorded about it, and of the little only the very recent chapter has any particular interest for us. Buckfast lost everything, not even a fragment of its original structure was left standing on the broad fields where its life had flourished and its buildings had been reared. For centuries wild grass and scrub growth possessed the land. In 1882 certain religious orders were expelled from France and, among them, the Benedictines. A small company of Benedictines went to Ireland, then to England, and there settled on the lands of Buckfast. For twenty-five years this company of Buckfast lived a rude, refugee type of life in huts. In 1907 a new abbot came to them bringing a vision of a Buckfast restored, the old community life revived, the old institutions reëstablished, and the buildings for all purposes erected. The abbot and the monks had hardly any money, few tools, and little developed skill, but they had courage and they had the vision. Under inspired leadership they set to work. They were not skilled craftsmen but they learned by doing. They gathered, cut, and placed stone; they fabricated wood, iron, and glass. The people in the neighborhood laughed at the simple-minded monks, but the monks worked on and, after another twenty-five years, in 1932, they completed their church and several other buildings, had reconverted the lands to agriculture, and established the community life.

Not everything had been lost of the ancient Buckfast: something remained of crucial importance. Deeply imbedded in the ground and covered from sight were the foundations of all the abbey buildings. These were too firmly established to be moved by the destroyers. The abbot is reported to have said: "We have no pictures or drawings of the ancient buildings but we have the foundations, and these are enough to guide us. Upon these we will build. The superstructures will probably not be replicas

of the old but they will be good and sound and true." The result of all this was the structure which was dedicated a decade and more ago.

This is the story, and it constitutes for us a parable of much more than ordinary significance. We are passing through a period of what is called reconversion, and although the word is most commonly used in relation to business and industry, it applies with equal meaning to many phases of social and personal life. From the ways of war we are returning to ways and institutions of peace. In doing this, we are reminded that much has been injured or destroyed: libraries and schools, homes and churches, orchards and gardens, factories and mills. In addition to the material losses, harm has been done to our social and communal ways. Every human society is held together and is of service to its members through habits and customs, attitudes and principles. These are more important than buildings and lands. They are the springs and governors of action and they have been seriously affected by the war years. If I understand the mood of the time, it is not the loss of material things which gives greatest concern and causes apprehension, rather it is the injury to the ways of social conduct. In terms of Buckfast, it is not the fate of the abbey buildings which concerns us most but the fate of the abbey way of life—the movement to create a just and friendly commonwealth. No one would have said that America was an ideal state, but we did believe that the democratic process was moving in the right direction. It is that process which has been injured. It is the damage done to social ways which alarms us most. It would be an exaggeration to say that our social life has returned to the wilderness, as was the case at Buckfast; but it would be no exaggeration to say that the moral structure of society has gravely suffered. The condition, then, is like that which the Benedictine abbot faced on the plains of South Devon. What he did under the circumstances was right, and it brought dramatic and successful results. He had a vision of a restored—we might say, a reconverted—abbey life. With indistinct lines but with clarity of hope, we have a vision of society under guidance of high principles with peace and good will as the result. But what can we do about it? Where shall we begin? How can we prosper the attainment of the vision? It is just here that the Buckfast history is so very valuable. The decisive factor in the abbey reconversion had not been destroyed because the foundations were all there, firmly laid and perfectly designed. Build on those, and what is created will not necessarily be a replica of the old, but it will be true and serviceable.

Deeply imbedded in our human society are the immovable foundations for a building of man, more beautiful and useful than any church or library or hostel, for a building of God, a house not made with hands. Rear the structure on those foundations, and it is sure to be good. Set to work as did those monks, always remembering two things: the vision and the foundations.

What are these foundations which are so sure and so important, which mark out our course and whose strength is greater than the strength of Gibraltar? They are moral principles, moral laws. Reconversion involves the transition from force as the arbiter of our ways to ethical guidance, without which there will be no reconversion, while with this in command there will be creations of great good. Moral principle in the conduct of life is the imperative for every one of us. Wherever we are, whatever we do, whatever our circumstances, we are builders or destroyers of the temple of man according as we are guided by moral principles or are violators of it. Orderly society is based upon trust, trust in the integrity of the individual in his honesty and fairness, trust that he will conscientiously discharge his several duties. Every act which is a fulfillment of that trust furthers reconversion; every act which is at variance hinders reconversion.

Every society which is of benefit to its members requires mutuality, generosity, good will. Every act which is of that character builds upon the eternal foundations, while every act of selfishness, greed, and ill will hinders reconversion. Why should we give food and clothing for the hungry and the naked? The answer is that every last one of us is a trustee of the estate of his fellow man, and a faithful discharge of that trust is required by the laws of our moral being. We can get along with what are called reduced standards of living but we cannot get along with reduced standards of honesty and fidelity. High wages, better incomes, better housing, have their claims; but reconversion does not depend upon them alone since it depends upon the respect for the pledged word, obedience to conscience, and compassion, out of which will come the better wages and the larger incomes and the better housing. We are told that the atomic bomb marked the closing of an age, but it did not mark the close of that ageless age in which moral law is supreme. The atomic bomb destroyed cities but it did not touch the foundations which, like God, are from everlasting to everlasting. The atomic bomb did not alter or minimize the fact that the city of man or the temple of God is built by the integrity and generosity of wise, patient, and industrious men or monks. We are all builders, and every individual and every act counts. There is nothing hidden that shall not be made manifest. Whatever Tom, Dick, and Harry do is made manifest either for reconversion or for its delay.

Standing by the side of the church at Buckfast, a visitor asked a monk a question. The visitor said: "The abbey which once stood here was destroyed; now another abbey has been reared on the same foundations. Has it ever occurred to you that this second abbey may go the way of the first, and, if so, what would you think?" "Yes," the man replied, "I have thought of that, but whatever happens, nothing can ever deprive those of us who have worked here of the deep satisfaction found in laboring to create in

obedience to our vision. Life for us has been rich and full because it has been dedicated to building on foundations which can never be moved." There is just that satisfaction open to all of us. The contribution which we may make to the attainment of the vision will be small and insignificant, but it will be large and significant for us in self-respect and in deep and abiding satisfaction. The kingdom of heaven which we desire is not a kingdom of ends, that is, the complete and permanent structure, but is a kingdom of means, that is, conduct conformed to the permanent foundation, whose other name is the everlasting and abiding God. The kingdom of heaven which is always near is not built "of adamant and gold" but is

> "Built of tears and sacred flames,
> And virtue reaching to its aims,
> Built of furtherance and pursuing,
> Not spent deeds, but of doing."

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY DANTE

WILLIAM H. COOPER
Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary

THE POSTWAR period will soon afford to the Christian world a new spectacle in the history of the church. Two major units of organized Christianity will find themselves more and more *vis-à-vis,* with a new and growing consciousness of their differing inner principles and their unlike tendencies and prospects. I refer to the Church of Rome on the one hand, united, absolutist, with a genius for strategy, organization, and diplomacy, but theologically bound by a definite and narrow tradition; and on the other hand the new World Council of Churches, equally catholic in numbers and in geographical spread, attaining by degrees a unity of the spirit, but with only a loose and incomplete federal organization; democratic, fertile in theological wealth, but embarrassed by conflicting traditions and unsolved antinomies in thought and practice. The agelong opposition between democracy and absolutism is about to enact its latest drama within Christendom and its churches. We, who do not know what the outcome of the conflict may be, must nevertheless be prepared to bear our part with an eye to the ultimate welfare and salvation of the church universal.

In order that we may be able to see in some detail what is involved here, I have selected the life story of a brilliant son of the Roman church in the last century, a man who became the storm centre in the remarkable constitutional changes which came about in his church during his active career. Those who still believe or assume that Rome "never changes"[1] should become better acquainted with the life and work of this man.

Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger was born in Bamberg, Bavaria, on February 28, 1799. His father and paternal grandfather were prominent as physicians and professors of medicine. His father, Ignaz, born in 1770, specialized in comparative anatomy and was a gifted and popular lecturer. Johann Joseph inherited his talent for teaching and his enthusiasm for science from his father, as well as his mother's intellectuality; and he developed marked powers of expression in both speaking and writing. Before taking up the study of theology at the age of eighteen, he had read as widely in French as in German, pursuing his father's cultural interests in philosophy and poetry. He became also fully conversant in English, so that Dr. Pusey could write to him from England in 1842: "Your English is good, indeed faultless."

Two motives seem to have directed him into the field of theology in his youth. The one was the thirst for knowledge which could not be satisfied

[1] The ancient claim is, *"Semper idem."*

by the agnosticism of the natural sciences on the deepest questions of life. Too often he had asked these deeper questions of his father, only to receive the answer: "I do not know," or "Das weiss man nicht." The other motive was his love for the Catholic church in which he had been nurtured. The words of St. Bernard had early impressed him: "Utinam mihi liceret videre ecclesiam sicut in diebus antiquis!"[2] His independent inquiries into church history were born of this passion to know more about the "Old Church." These inquiries began without any encouragement from his teachers, for at this time church history was treated with indifference in German Catholic circles.

After studying in the gymnasium at Würzburg, he continued his studies at Bamberg, at first in the lyceum and then in the theological seminary. On April 5, 1822, he was ordained a priest. The first years after his ordination were spent teaching ecclesiastical history and canon law in the lyceum at Aschaffenburg. In June, 1826, he received his doctorate in theology from the University of Landshut. His doctor's thesis and first published book were on *The Doctrine of the Eucharist in the First Three Centuries*, (Mainz, 1826). This was to be followed by an amazing wealth of publications in the field of church history, making Döllinger the Catholic counterpart in Germany of the Protestants, Neander and von Harnack. Editions of Döllinger's works continued to come out posthumously after 1890, and probably no other German theological writer of the last century was so frequently and promptly translated into English as he.

In this same year, 1826, the University of Landshut was reorganized and removed to Munich, becoming famous thereafter as the University of Munich. Döllinger was called at once to Munich and was identified with it as its greatest ornament for the rest of his life, or for sixty-four years, being elected in 1844 its representative in the Bavarian parliament, and later its rector. It used to be said of Döllinger at Munich, "Where Döllinger is, there is the faculty."

In the summer of 1842 Döllinger began a correspondence with the Tractarian leader in England, Dr. Pusey, who consulted him on some collations of the text of Chrysostom. He soon came to know and correspond with other Englishmen, as Gladstone, then thirty-three years old, whom he met in 1842 at Baden-Baden, and James R. Hope, whom Döllinger had the pleasure of welcoming as a convert from the Church of England to the Church of Rome.

At this early stage Döllinger was still a strong Roman Catholic and indeed, in Bavarian politics, an ultramontane. Yet he manifested the kindliest sympathy and patience toward his English Tractarian friends. To him they were Protestants and heretics. Yet his fine tact taught him to judge

[2] "Oh that I might be permitted to see the church as it once was in the olden days!"

them from a Protestant standpoint, and judging them thereby, he saw that they were moving toward Catholicism. Little did he know in 1842 that a generation later he himself would be seeking and welcoming fellowship from Anglicans and Greek and Russian Orthodox, having been thrust out of his own church by excommunication.

While by heritage and talent von Döllinger was always a potential independent within his own church, the first trends toward independent expression do not appear before 1848. His historical work on the Reformation, for example, the first edition of which began to appear in 1846, reveals no softening on Döllinger's part toward the Protestant Reformers although he was perhaps the first Catholic to go thoroughly into the Protestant sources with the modern historical method. In 1847, Abel, who had been the ultramontane prime minister of Bavaria for some years, fell from power. This meant for Döllinger and some of his associates at the university the loss of their professor's chairs, for the university was bound up with Bavarian politics. Yet Döllinger was held in such general esteem that in 1848, while exiled temporarily from the university, he was chosen a delegate to the historic but abortive democratic national assembly in Frankfort. It was in this same year 1848 that the French ultramontanes announced their fourfold program, two points of which were enough to alienate Döllinger, namely, the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the definition of papal infallibility. From this year, 1848, dates Döllinger's growing alienation from ultramontane ideas and his growing criticism of the papacy. That which had been the ideal of his youth was to become the bane of his old age. What he thought of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 we do not know, but he said about it in 1869 has been written for all the world to read: "an exhibition" (he calls it in *Janus*) "of the characteristic contempt of the Jesuits for the tradition of the ancient church."[3]

In 1857 Döllinger visited Rome. The visit proved to be a repetition of the experience of the other famous independent spirits of the church like Luther and Erasmus. He saw too much to be able to retain his old faith in the workings of the papacy. In 1861 he delivered three lectures in Munich in which he advocated the abandonment by the pope of all temporal power. What a contrast between this born Catholic and a convert like Newman, who in 1869 was to plead, in a fascinating but futile sermon on "The Pope and the Revolution," for the retention of that power!

As Döllinger grew older he waxed bolder. In 1863 he appeared in the spirit of the old French liberal Catholics of the previous generation, Lamennais, Lacordaire, and Montalembert, with whom he had had contacts when they had visited Germany in 1832. He invited one hundred Roman

[3] *The Pope and the Council,* by Janus, (London, Oxford, and Cambridge, 1869), p. 34.

Catholic theologians to Malines for an open discussion of modern problems and modern science in relation to the church. The pope ordered the conference to disperse after a four days' session. The next year on December 8, 1864, Pius IX issued the Syllabus of Errors in which Döllinger's views were expressly condemned.

It was the assembling of the Vatican Council and the promulgation of the dogma of infallibility which called forth Döllinger's best powers and his most strenuous efforts, although he was now seventy years old. He saw what was coming and armed himself and his followers for the fray, with the marvelous historical knowledge which he had accumulated in fifty years of research, reflection, teaching, and observation, as well as practical experience in politics. Solidly with him was the entire Roman Catholic theological faculty in Munich, probably at that time the best faculty in the Catholic theological world. An enormous amount of public opinion and sympathy followed him in Catholic Germany. With his brilliant pupil, Johann Friedrich, and Professor Huber, both of the Munich faculty, he prepared a series of articles for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* which appeared promptly in book form in 1869 under the allusive title *Janus* and were as promptly translated into English. Articles and book and English edition were all anonymous, but the authorship was scarcely a secret. *Janus* lays bare without reserve the whole long list of papal forgeries on which papal power had been built up through the centuries. It is church history with a vengeance. Henry Boynton Smith, America's eminent contemporary church historian and theologian, called it "the ablest book against papal infallibility."[4] Döllinger's volume is necessarily superior to any Protestant book on the subject because it reveals Rome's church principles (or lack of them) from within.

Not content with his preliminary blast, Döllinger went to work at the Vatican Council itself. He had as coworkers the librarian of the Vatican, Augustin Theiner, who was out of favor with the pope and was willing to give him most valuable information at a time when the Vatican Library archives were officially locked up by papal order to keep the bishops away from the records of the Council of Trent; and he had his own pupil, Friedrich, a trained historian who knew more of the Roman church's past than any one else at the council except Bishop Hefele and who rivalled Hefele in his acquaintance with counciliar history. Friedrich was suspected by the authorities but could not be expelled from the council since he was in attendance as theological adviser to the powerful Cardinal Hohenlohe. With the collaboration of these three keen and able minds and the contacts which they were able to maintain, there appeared the famous *Letters from the Council at Rome by Quirinus,* which gave a day-to-day account of the

[4] *Henry Boynton Smith, His Life and Work,* edited by his wife, (1881), p. 314.

proceedings and inner workings of the Council and caused an immense sensation, both in Rome and throughout the world. Although not now the only source of our information on what went on behind the scenes at the council, these letters are indispensable for our knowledge of the history. Their merit is that they are the work of several men rather than of one, for no one man could adequately have covered the council as a reporter.

A turning point for Döllinger and his associates, but also for the whole Roman church and the Christian world, was reached on July 18, 1870, when the papal dogma concerning papal infallibility was promulgated. It is a matter of common knowledge that only two bishops at the council, one an American and one an Italian, voted against the dogma. What is not generally known is the fact brought out by J. B. Bury in his Cambridge lectures on the history of the papacy in the nineteenth century, that this vote, commonly mentioned in the textbooks of church history, was the one taken at the last *public* session of the Vatican Council. The vote at the last *secret* session, when the bishops still felt comparatively free to express their own minds, was so different that if the Catholic world had been aware of it, it would have invalidated the dogma. By ancient Catholic tradition the promulgation of a dogma required the practical unanimity of a General Council. At the last secret session of the Vatican Council held July 13, 1870, the vote was: 451 *placet;* 88 *non placet;* 62 *placet juxta modum.*[5]

On August 14, 1870, at Königswinter, and again at Nürnberg on August 25-27, a number of German Catholic leaders headed by Dr. Döllinger issued public statements refusing their assent to the new doctrine of papal infallibility issued by the Vatican Council in the previous month. The dissenters further decided to invite the Dutch Jansenist bishops to administer confirmation in their churches and to consecrate a bishop for Germany. In October, 1871, Archbishop Loos, of Utrecht, made an episcopal visitation in Bavaria in response to the request of the "Old Catholics," as they now called themselves. On August 11, 1873, Dr. Joseph Reinkens, a theologian of the Catholic faculty at Breslau, was consecrated the first bishop of the Old Catholics with headquarters at Bonn.

To the new movement Dr. Döllinger stood in an anomalous relation. He always maintained that he would never be a party to a schism. For this reason, as well as because of advanced age, he refused to become the official leader of the Old Catholics or to take an active part in the work of organization. On the other hand, he was the inspirer of the movement, its spokesman, and is greatest advocate. After his excommunication by the Roman Archbishop of Mainz in April, 1871, he was never reconciled to the papacy and died out of communion with it, receiving the last rites at the hands of his pupil and biographer, Dr. Johann Friedrich, an Old Catholic who had been excommunicated along with his master.

[5] Bury, *History of the Papacy in the 19th Century,* (London, 1930), p. 126.

Döllinger's excommunication brought him immediate recognition from his university as well as from other quarters of the academic world. He was elected *rector magnificus* of the University of Munich. At about the same time Oxford and Edinburgh conferred on him honorary LL.D.'s.

That Döllinger's leadership of the Old Catholics was *virtual* if not official is attested by the interesting fact that he presided at every important assembly held by the movement in the first five years after its inception. These meetings included the two Old Catholic congresses (Munich, September, 1871; and Cologne, 1872) and the reunion conferences held at Bonn in 1874 and in 1875. These latter were called to include representatives of the Church of England and the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches and were attended also by sympathetic Protestant delegates from Germany and America to consider a doctrinal basis for Christian unity. As such, the Bonn conferences were the real precursors of the ecumenical conferences of the twentieth century, beginning with Lausanne in 1927.

In a true sense Dr. Döllinger was bigger and broader than the specific movement in his native land with which his name will always be associated. No man in Germany was more favorably known to the entire Christian world outside Germany in the decade of the seventies. His breadth of view, accuracy of scholarship, and mastery of languages gave him, almost alone among the Catholics of his day, a world outlook. His approach to the problem of Christian unity, which had come to mean an acute crisis in his personal life, is beautifully exhibited in his addresses delivered at Munich in 1872 published as *Lectures on the Reunion of the Churches.* It is significant that these lectures were translated and published in England before they appeared in their first German edition, a tribute to the ecumenicity of their author.

On one point, however, Döllinger remained a conservative Roman Catholic and refused to go along with the Old Catholics. When the latter, in 1878, permitted their priests to marry, he disapproved. On the other hand, he retained to the end his resolute hostility to the Jesuits. In 1889, one year before his death, appeared one of his last works, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten in der römisch-katholischen Kirche seit dem sechszehnten Jahrhundert,* in which he registered his undying opposition to their moral standards and methods. He died, full of labors and honors, in his ninety-first year, January 14, 1890, the year also of John Henry Newman's death.

The incident is told in Johann Friedrich's full length biography of Döllinger[6] that as he lay on his deathbed a certain lady of his acquaintance, Frau von Sicherer, gazed upon his countenance and exclaimed, "Wie gleicht er Dante!"

[6] Johann Friedrich, *Ignaz von Döllinger: Sein Leben auf Grund seines schriftlichen Nachlasses,* (Munich, 1899-1901), 3 vols. I am indebted to the Schwenkfelder Historical Library and Museum, Pennsburg, Pa., for the loan of this handsome work. No other copy is listed by the Union Library Catalogue for Philadelphia and vicinity.

His biographer then goes on to say that the resemblance was closer than that of two faces. There was an affinity of spirit between these two loyal sons of the papacy, although they had lived seven centuries apart. One had expressed his thought in the greatest poetry, the other in energetic, cultured prose. But both had fought for the clear, sharp separation of secular and spiritual authority; both had fearlessly exposed the evils of papal autocracy; both had endured the contumely of their contemporaries, as seeing Him who is invisible.

Before leaving our subject it will be well to allow Ignaz von Döllinger to speak for himself on aspects of the question of Christian reunion which are again to the front a half century after his death. Let us hear him first on the subject of Vaticanism as he addresses the union conference at Bonn on August 13, 1875:

> Since 1870, therefore, there stand facing each other in the Christian world two perfectly separate bodies; the one hundred and eighty millions of Roman Catholics and the opponents of the infallibility of the pope. It certainly may not be assumed that these one hundred and eighty millions all believe in the Vatican decrees; but they have provisionally in silence or in appearance accepted the new dogmas. That can not so remain. We stand at the beginning of great changes in the Roman Catholic Church. I hold it to be impossible that the Vatican decrees are to be the law of thought of one hundred and eighty million Christians, in part of the most cultivated nations. Tinder is amassed in the Roman Catholic Church. The time will surely come when, first here, then there, it will break out into a conflagration. Then it will be shown whether the one hundred and eighty millions of men in earnest believe as much in the truth of the Vatican decrees "as in the being of God"; for that is certainly, as an English infallibilist bishop has said, what is demanded from the adherents of the Vatican Church. If I, an old investigator and teacher of history, understand anything whatsoever of history, that is absolutely impossible.[7]

In a calmer tone he expresses his hope for the church of the future:

> Where faith and love are found, there hope cannot be absent. He who believes in Christ and loves his country and Christians of all confessions, cannot divest himself of the hope that no distant future may reveal a church which, as the genuine heir and representative of the church of the early centuries, may have room and power of attraction for those who are now separated; a church where liberty will be reconciled with order—discipline, morality, and unity of faith with science and freedom of inquiry.[8]

Most illuminating of all is the mature conclusion to which von Döllinger came at the end of his long life and earnest spiritual struggles. One year before his death, on February 12, 1889, he wrote to Nippold: "You are

[7] *Report of the Union Conferences at Bonn,* (New York, 1876), pp. 68-69.

[8] *Lectures on the Reunion of the Churches,* (London, Oxford, and Cambridge, 1872), p. 102. The lectures were delivered in the museum at Munich in February and March, 1872, in German. Their first publication, here quoted, was in England and in an English translation by Henry Nutcombe Oxenham.

quite right. The compulsory unity of the papal church offers many advantages, but these are far outweighed by the many bad consequences. And the continual development of new church bodies in the Protestant world is no sign of weakness, but rather of living energy and power."[9]

It is my judgment that in von Döllinger there is evidenced a change of fundamental religious conviction and loyalty which must give serious pause to certain *literati* of the twentieth century. Many of these are allowing themselves to be drawn æsthetically and romantically toward the papal allegiance, while they remain blind to the lessons of history which appealed so strongly to the conscience of this great man.

[9] Quoted from Friedrich, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 666. The original, which I have translated, reads: "Sie haben ganz recht. Die erzwungene Einheit der Papstkirche gewährt mancherlei Vorteile, aber diese werden weit überwogen von den vielen schlimmen Folgen. Und die fortgehende Bildung von neuen kirchlichen Körperschaften in der protestantischen Welt ist kein Zeichen von Schwäche, sondern von lebendiger Triebkraft."

THE WITNESS OF NATURE TO THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

E. PAUL SMITH
First Baptist Church, Lambertville, New Jersey

RELIGIONS may be classified roughly either as world-denying or world-affirming. Confucianism, as an example, is so thoroughly wrapped up in adaptation of life to its environment that we may call it a world-affirming religion (if, indeed, it be a religion rather than an ethical movement). Confucius sought to harmonize all forces of the community with the laws under which it functioned. On the other hand, Hinduism with its Nirvana, storing up merit for another world, is definitely a world-denying religion. It seeks a separation from the world of desires, the discouragement of appetites rather than their satisfaction, neglect of health and comfort, and even the destruction of life itself. Thus steppingstones are laid to another incarnation which is higher in proportion as natural desires and appetites have been killed. Christianity shares both of these classifications in its various interpretations and expressions. Certainly the conception of Christianity as accompanied by numerous super- and extra-natural phenomena, and characterized by dispensational rather than evolutionary progress toward a final catastrophic culmination is to a large degree world-denying. On the other hand, that conception of Christianity which seeks truth wherever it may be found, cost what it may, accepting the world as God's good work and searching the secret of life he has hidden therein, is a world-affirming religion. Hence my subject: "The Witness of Nature to the Message of Jesus." I have chosen this subject because it has been my delightful privilege for fifteen years to spend a part of each summer in our Baptist Camp Unami as leader in nature lore. The whole purpose of this camp is the development of Christian character in its campers. May we, then, glance briefly at the part played by the campers' fellowship in nature lore as a preparation for an understanding of the character and message of Jesus.

First we gather in the "grove" for the nature lore class. I have brought along a pair of binoculars, a small magnifying glass, and a few field guides to identify birds, trees, flowers, butterflies, mushrooms, stars, etc., for I have no idea just which ones will be needed. Our textbook is Nature: all around us, open for us to study. The day is bright, with a warm sun and slight breeze; so we just look about us. Someone in the class brushes a cobweb from his face with an irritated motion. What, a cobweb out in the open, moving from place to place? Well, not merely a cobweb, really an airship, for we note dozens of the same type of filmy silken strands moving here and there, and discover that each is attached at its lower end to a tiny spider

perched on a limb in the sun. As the breeze and the sun on the lengthening thread lift more and more strongly, suddenly the spider gives a slight leap and sails up and away, possibly to travel several miles before his airship is tangled with some tree. Here he stops, examines the situation, and if convenient makes it his permanent home. If not, another airship is fashioned and another trip is begun. This hatch of spiders numbered several hundred, and if all but two of them are not destroyed before their next generation comes into being, what a mess of spiders we will soon have! These spiders are the same kind which, when grown, crawl about in your cabins—great, big fuzzy ones. No, they are not poisonous except sufficiently to allow them to dispatch mercifully the flies and mosquitoes they are continually hunting. Only one spider is really poisonous about here, and that is the black widow, which you so seldom see that you might as well cross it off your list entirely unless you go hunting for it intentionally. Shall we go on about spiders and mention the intense devotion of the mother spider to its brood from the day she lays her clutch of eggs and ties them up in a soft silken bag which she carries with her at all times and which she will not surrender except over her dead body? She sees them hatch and step away from her protection to shift for themselves. Then her body is discovered stiff in death, having performed her lifetime task. Who inspired in her that devotion? Who designated her task? Who planned her life?

"Look at this big bug!" calls an excited lad. As we look, there appears a grotesque figure. A slim, handsome, shiny blue mudwasp standing high on her six legs is carrying under her belly lengthwise a worm twice as long and thick as herself which offers no resistance whatsoever because this lady has anæsthetized her victim before carrying him off. She had to do this by making thirteen subcutaneous injections with her hypodermic needle, one in each of the ganglia which constitute the elementary brain of the segmented worm. She carries the worm to a cell of mud, where she tucks him carefully in, deposits a ting egg beside him, seals up the cell, and is off to build another cell. Sometimes she catches spiders instead of worms, and some wasps are called "cicada killers" because they usually catch the lace-winged cicada for their young to feed on. In each case, however, the little surgeon strikes with the anæsthetic sting at the exact spot where the nerve ganglia are located. These sleepy insects will then live several weeks; thus when the egg hatches, the young will find a perfectly preserved store of food, so fresh that the vital juices have not even ceased entirely to circulate, and they don't mind being eaten at all, because they don't feel it (I hope).

Thus the class progresses from day to day, sometimes examining flowers, sometimes trees, mice, squirrels, snakes, mushrooms, birds, turtles, frogs, insects, butterflies, stars. And they never tire of stories, legends, and myths. Weird traditional fears and tall stories of hoop snakes, sea serpents,

human vampires, and zombies are debunked. Pets may accumulate—a baby skunk; the six-foot pilot black snake eats an egg for us and then climbs a tree as we stand and watch his sinuous motion. We measure him for the benefit of each group. Box turtles by the score; bird's nests identified, perhaps the young fed; cocoons gathered and hatched before our eyes! The eternal question is, "What is this?" The eternal demand, "Tell us more about it."

There is a far greater variety and romance in the true stories of nature's ways than the mind of man could pack into books of fiction and mystery in a thousand years. Long before man had begun to think of any anæsthetic better than a blunt club, the glowworm was administering anæsthetics to its victims in such a skillful manner that they did not know that they were being anæsthetized. Before man had begun to domesticate dogs, cats, and cows for his own purposes, ants were herding aphids as "cows," and raising mushrooms in their subterranean channels for food, going to war, capturing and enslaving their neighbors, and, along with the bees, predetermining the sex of their progeny according to the particular needs of the family.

Perhaps you have observed that the real purpose of this delightful fellowship is the introduction of the campers to the manifold evidences of God revealed all about them in everyday natural life processes—to let them know that nature is not enemy but friend. A challenge put to the boys and girls in the early session of the camp is "All nature is friendly." Many, whether young or old, unless raised in close touch with nature, come with a real fear that every dead stick conceals a deadlier serpent, lurking with poised fangs for the first succulent boy who passes; that skunks are positively on the prowl to squirt their stench wherever there is anyone to absorb it; that each movement of a leaf or branch is a threat; that all nature is an enemy to fear, and the only safety lies in the walls of well-built houses and the paved streets of compact cities. The fact is these walls and streets are packed with a thousand dangers to one offered in the quiet of God's forest cathedrals. The wild life of the forest is simply going on its way, tending to its own business, intent on securing food, shelter, or the satisfaction of a friendly curiosity. With few exceptions, trees offer shelter and strength and beauty rather than a threat. Most wild things would like to eat out of your hand except that they are afraid of you (and probably with good reason).

Let us observe, in this regard, that no one can present a "world-denying" religion based on a true observation and acquaintance with the operation of natural forces. Gathered in a nature lore group one day, an iconoclastic lad grumbled, "Do we have to believe all the stuff that———— is handing out?" What———— was "handing out" was a systematic presentation of God's creative week, the Garden of Eden, the fall of man by

eating the apple, with accompanying rejection from the Garden. Such a beautiful series he had worked out, and so appropriate in the setting of the woodland vesper spot: seven days of twenty-four hours each, talking serpents, an anthropomorphic God playing hide-and-seek with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. But the boys saw the gulf to be bridged between the processes of natural law and the allegorical explanation of the accomplished fact. They could not accept a "world-denying" presentation. Thus was the Creation story of Genesis lost to them, because of insistence on its literal accuracy. That was an Old Testament story, and while the Old Testament carries several decidedly world-denying stories, it presents in the main, with intelligent understanding, one of the most beautifully consistent world-affirming faiths of the world. Its final loyalty to the law with punishments and rewards, the necessity of the taking of life that better life may be established, and the definite acceptance of capital punishment on groups for individual sins, with its developments toward the acceptance of mercy, love, gentleness, and willing sacrifice, mark it as truly a natural religion evolving toward the ideals and ideas of Jesus.

Turning to the New Testament, we find Jesus constantly using illustrations from natural law to show how his kingdom operated. Moreover, he used these illustrations in such a way that we feel that there are true parallels existing, and the laws of the kingdom are recognized as the same laws which are operative in the natural world. I shall never forget the doubt that rose in my mind when, as a lad, I watched a clever evangelist take a glass of clear liquid, and pour into it something that made it "as black as a soul dead in sin," and then add a brilliant red liquid representing the blood of Christ, which combined to produce a perfectly clear liquid, to show how we are saved by Jesus' blood, and our souls cleansed from sin. It looked trumped up and artificial, and testified only to the cleverness of the performer. He was bringing into play an entirely different law from that by which I felt God worked with souls. But when Jesus said, "A sower went forth to sow,"[1] all he had to do for his disciples was to explain what was meant by the seed, and who by the types of soil. He did not have to warp the application into any different principles of growth to accommodate the laws of spiritual growth in the least, for they were assumed to be the same. Likewise with the "tares,"[2] "Consider the lilies,"[3] the "birds of the air,"[4] "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[5] "You can foretell the weather; why can't you observe

[1] Matt. 13: 3.
[2] Matt. 13: 25.
[3] Matt. 6: 28; Luke 12: 27.
[4] Matt. 8: 20; Luke 9: 58.
[5] John 3: 8.

the signs of the times?"[6] Then, when the Jews challenged him saying, "Show us a sign,"[7] Jesus' reply was a refusal to show a sign, but a reminder that those who based their faith on signs did so because there was sin in their lives, which they did not want to correct. They should be able to recognize his authority without the intervention of the miraculous. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign."[8]

I gather from this characteristic of Jesus' teachings that he was confident that an adequate knowledge of natural law with regard to material things is an appropriate basis for an understanding of his message concerning spiritual things. The least we can say is that they run parallel.

Nature is friendly. And *Jesus was friendly.* A certain house wren, each morning as the flag was being raised, was accustomed to perch on the tip of the flagpole and to sit there like a drum major, singing at the top of his voice all the time the boys were gathered around the pole, holding their morning devotions. One morning he failed to appear, and the boys asked about him. We found his body still warm, but with the neck broken, on the floor of the administration building where he had crashed into the closed screen on his way to the flagpole and his friends—"killed in action." Several families of skunks, chipmunks, and mice, came regularly to mess hall and cabins for their meals and didn't mind our presence at all; in fact, they seemed to enjoy it.

Nature is healing. And *Jesus was a healer.* A broken branch always tends to grow larger and stronger at the point once broken. Dr. Alvah Hobart punctured his scalp on the spiral stairway in the Crozer library, and as he wiped the blood from his face, he remarked, "It's a good thing it was my head instead of my coat. My head will get well, but my coat wouldn't." When we injure ourselves, we don't worry about it, we just give nature a chance.

Nature is idealistic. And *Jesus was idealistic.* Before mankind had conceived the thought of producing a prize Berkshire boar from the razorback, nature had progressed all the way from the spiral nebulæ (or whatever was the first orderly movement) to semicivilized man. It was without the aid of man's brain that all this was accomplished. Only through the natural tendency toward improvement—watching the chance of each generation, and taking advantage of that chance without consulting any of us—has this advancement taken place.

Nature sacrifices life that other lives may be improved. Jesus sacrificed life that other lives might be improved. "This is my body which is given for you." The word "given" marks the difference between the process of

[6] Matt. 16: 3 (paraphrased).
[7] Matt. 16: 1.
[8] Matt. 16: 4.

Jesus' sacrifice and that of the jungle victim. Survival demands that life be taken. But the "survival of the fittest" knows of no demand that life be given. It was not the fact of Jesus' suffering that saved the world. It was the fact that he was willing to suffer, to refuse to withhold himself, when the test came. The subordination of physical things to the spiritual is the higher step in the natural processes of evolution.

May I observe before I close, that nature lore, consistently applied, bears no witness to the miraculous element in religion? The miracle is witnessed only by the exception to the law. Nature admits of no exceptions. I have not brought in for discussion the element of the miraculous as accompaniments of the Christian faith. As soon as a natural law is found which testifies to a so-called "miracle," the miracle is no longer a miracle. Only personal testimony is acceptable in witnessing to the miraculous. Nature lore does not witness to the truth of this phase of Christian preaching.

Meeting nature as a friend, lying under the stars to stretch the mind into infinity without strain, perceiving a constructive relationship among all forms and stages of living things, catching the sacrificial nature of all law: these complement the Bible study of the nature lore group. Stars, trees, flowers, birds, and life around us are so much more efficient teachers than we, that the spirit of government is replaced by a fellowship of equality as teacher and pupil bow before the eternal foundations of life, and together seek the mystery of Jesus and his matchless message.

The trees are God's great alphabet:
With them He writes in shining green
Across the world his thoughts serene.

He scribbles poems gainst the sky
With a gay, leafy lettering,
For us and for our bettering.

The wind pulls softly at His page,
And every star and bird
Repeats in dutiful delight His word,
And every blade of grass
Flutters to class.

Like a slow child that does not heed,
I stand at summer's knees,
And from the primer of the wood
I spell that life and love are good,
I learn to read.[9]

[9] "A, B, C's in Green," by Leonora Speyer. This poem appeared in Mrs. Speyer's volume of verse, *Canopic Jar* (E. P. Dutton, 1921), and is reprinted here with her permission.

Where Ignorance Is Bliss, 'Tis Folly

Recently I heard two good sermons, with a text—both used the same text—from the too often neglected book of Hebrews. Since neither sermon indulged, on the one hand, in overconfident pronouncements as to what "faith" meant to this author and how nice it would be if there were more of this admirable quality in the world today, or, on the other hand, made any reference whatever to Melchizedek, it would be possible to style both of them distinct achievements—at least decided novelties. And both were good, wholesome sermons, principally, I suppose, because both preachers were good and wholesome men. My only criticism of them was that their thesis, despite their confident assumption, was not supported by the text they had chosen. Of course, there is nothing novel in that fact; amplification of this theme, however, would lead us too far afield.

The text selected was the concluding clause of Hebrews 11 : 40—". . . that apart from us they should not be made perfect." These words had, and properly, caught the preachers' attention, although neither of them knew what they meant. And they were intrigued by what they thought they saw. Too often, they insisted, religion is regarded as a completed performance. In the formative days of the past God did things for men, the patriarchs and the apostles made their achievements; but that is long since past—in a word, "others have labored, and we have entered into their labors." And here in this verse both preachers, quite independently, were convinced they had found support for their wholesome dissatisfaction with any such view which suggested that the tale was told. Without quoting him, both were convinced with Isaac Watts that there were plenty of foes still to be fought and that sailing through bloody seas was necessary for us if the past worthies were to recline on beds of ease, flowery or otherwise. In short, there were tasks for us to do—and plenty of them; and unless we did them, not only would they remain undone, but the whole struggle hitherto would be incomplete, might even be pointless. Did not this unknown writer insist, having catalogued the heroes of the past, that our experience was necessary for their work to be really perfect; that is, that their labors had not completed the tasks? that it was up to us to bring their work to its glorious fulfillment? that the foundations had been laid but that we must put on the capstone?

No, that was not what the author appears to have meant. These values—and no sensible man would deny their importance—were not before his eyes at all. His emphasis was just the reverse. He is insisting not that our achievements are necessary to bring the labors of the past to

perfection, but rather that we are mighty lucky to have any share at all in the redemptive work of God. It is not that our experience was necessary for their reward to be full, but that in his goodness God had reserved through many centuries the fulfillment, consummated in Jesus Christ—the "reward" for all fortunate enough to have a share in it—until "our" (that is, the writer's) time. To repeat, it was not that we were necessary to complete what would otherwise have been imperfect—such a notion would have scandalized him, as it would most of his fellow Christians—God could have accomplished his work of redemption and have sent his Great High Priest whenever he had chosen, and the work would in no wise have suffered. On the contrary, lucky for us, in his kindness he had waited so long before acting.

It is farthest from my mind to deny that in the other view are profound values. I am not even trying to weigh one against the other. It is simply that I am insisting that it is utterly illegitimate, however noble the purpose, to twist ancient words into seeming support of what to their authors would have been scandalous. It would probably not have been difficult for the preachers to have found texts which actually did support their views; failing that, they could still have made their point, without scriptural support, and to thinking men it would have been no whit less impressive.

And after all there is a powerful sermon yet to be preached from these words, rightly understood, which would be quite different from those to which I listened. Every age is a bit too self-assured that this is the crowning day; that it stands as the real culmination and high spot of all history; that it has all the answers and thus is under obligation to straighten out all the messes of the past. Can any parent who has a child in high school remember easily an evening meal in which, somewhere between soup and dessert, it was not insisted—or taken for granted—that the younger generation is the hope of the world, that the fool errors of the fuddy-duddy oldsters which have spragged the wheel of the world are going to be cleared up, and right speedily, by those who now have all the answers? I may be unduly impatient, but personally I am a bit wearied by this incessant replaying of a phonograph record which appears to me worn thin. Is there not a place for the other insistence—of course it will have to be rephrased, and drastically—that the past is not one consistent and sorry tale of blunders wrought by pygmies who arrogantly thought they were giants, and that in sober earnest "in those days there were giants in the land" from whom, even the stary-eyed younger generation has much to learn and to whom it may, not unbecomingly, occasionally be grateful?

From Off the Campus and On

A REASONABLY COMPLETE list of the achievements and responsibilities of Dr. Van Dusen is literally breath-taking. Last year he became president of Union Theological Seminary, where he had been a member of the faculty since 1926. In the course of less than five decades he has written nine books, edited six more, contributed chapters to still others, and written numerous articles for journals and reviews. He is a member of three editorial boards, a trustee of nine colleges and schools, a member (or chairman) of innumerable other committees and boards. In 1937 he was a delegate to the Oxford Conference and in the following year to the Madras World Missionary Conference. This list only scratches the surface. To obtain an article and a book review for the same issue from this indefatigable worker is no mean achievement. Dr. Van Dusen is a graduate of Princeton University, Union, and Edinburgh University (Ph.D.). New York University honored him last year with an S.T.D.

It is a particular pleasure to be able to print Dr. Howard Wayne Smith's critique of President Van Dusen's essay. The latter appeared to the editor to raise questions of sufficient moment to merit further discussion. Dr. Smith graciously consented to assume the rôle of devil's advocate. For twenty-five years he was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, of which he has been pastor *emeritus* since his retirement a few years ago. He is recording secretary of the American Baptist Historical Society, a trustee of Crozer, and for many years has been a leading figure in the denominational life of Northern Baptists and in the civic affairs of his home town.

Dr. Pinchas Wechter was born in Russia and there received the traditional Jewish education in Bible, Talmud, and Hebrew literature. After coming to America he graduated from the University of Dayton. In 1939 he received his Ph.D. from Dropsie College. He teaches Bible and Hebrew literature at Gratz College, Philadelphia.

So far as the editor has been able to observe, people either like the work of W. H. Auden tremendously or they dislike it with equal intensity. Mr. Wasson would seem to be in the former category. Without committing himself to a statement as to the prickly poet, the editor frankly admits that he likes the present essay—else it would not have been printed. Mr. Wasson is a native of Maryland, a graduate of Johns Hopkins and of Princeton Theological Seminary. He is chairman of the editorial board of the Presbyterian weekly, *Monday Morning*. Since 1940 he has been minister of the Wayne Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Griffin may be introduced in his own words (which he had no inkling would see printer's ink):

Myself—an honest-to-goodness parish minister for forty-five years: Braintree, Massachusetts (All Souls' Church), 1901-1909; Montreal, Canada (Church of the Messiah), 1909-1917; Philadelphia (First Unitarian Church), 1917 to date. Honor-

ary degrees: Harvard, Bates, Amherst—all D.D.'s. University preacher at Harvard for twenty-five years; also preacher at Leland Stanford, Dickinson, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Mt. Holyoke, Cornell, Amherst, etc. Member of Phi Alpha and other learned societies, including the Union League, Philadelphia. If that is not enough, add what I should have done.

It is unnecessary to add more than a hearty welcome to this distinguished and devoted minister.

Dr. Cooper is a graduate of Harvard and of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Following graduation from the latter in 1926 he became pastor of Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, and in 1928 came to Grace Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. During the past month he has been installed professor of Old Testament at Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis. A lineal descendant of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, organizer of the Lutheran Church in America, he has been for years chairman of a committee entrusted with the publication of Muhlenberg's *Journals*.

E. Paul Smith is a graduate of Bucknell University and Crozer Theological Seminary. He has had several parishes in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Idaho. During the first world war he was an army chaplain. He is now minister of the First Baptist Church in Lambertville, New Jersey. Other interests and responsibilities will be evident from his essay.

It is always a pleasant task to introduce the able and devoted reviewers who contribute so much to the value of the CROZER QUARTERLY. Scarcely a week passes without a letter from some subscriber expressing appreciation for the frank and impartial tone of our reviews and for their prompt appearance. To our reviewers the editor gratefully adds his word of appreciation. Dr. Aubrey is president of Crozer. Dr. Bixler is president of Colby College. Mr. Brooks is minister of the Central Methodist Church, Middleboro, Mass. Dr. Cadbury is Hollis professor of divinity at Harvard. Mr. Cobb has been Encyclopedia Britannica fellow at the University of Chicago and is under appointment to the faculty of Kansas Wesleyan. Dr. Dauerty was for many years minister of the Moorestown (N. J.) Presbyterian Church. Dr. Davis is professor of theology at Crozer. Dr. Enslin has the chair of New Testament in the same faculty. Dr. Herrick has just retired after many years of distinguished service as president of Andover Newton Theological School. Professor Howson is chairman of the department of religion at Vassar. Professor Keighton has the chair of homiletics at Crozer. Professor Moehlman was for many years, until his recent retirement, professor of church history at Colgate-Rochester. Dr. Muelder is dean of the Boston University School of Theology. Mr. Murphy is a graduate fellow at Colgate-Rochester. Dr. Neisser was for many years a member of the Crozer faculty. Professor Pritchard has the chair of Old Testament at Crozer. Drs. Smith and Van Dusen have both been introduced in preceding paragraphs. Professor Thomas is a member of the Crozer faculty in the field of practical theology. Mr. Westphal has been for twenty years minister of the Lansdowne Baptist Church.

BOOK REVIEWS

Faith and Reason, by Nels F. S. Ferré, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. xii, 251. $2.50.

"Every field of knowledge shares an interest in, a responsibility for, and a relation to the whole field of human knowledge." In this spirit Dr. Ferré contributes an important book on one of the most persistent problems of theology and philosophy. He pursues the issues of faith and reason, however, far beyond the limits of knowledge and into the realm of personal decision and dedication. His position is avowedly existential. As he develops the standpoint of existentialism, it differs from many presentations of that school of thought in its wholehearted appreciation and appeal to reason. The basic issue does not lie, for him, between faith and reason disjunctively analyzed, but between "the objective and the existential use of reason."

By the existential use of reason, which incorporates the truths of science and philosophy but goes beyond them in a decision of faith, he hopes to resolve some of the ancient dilemmas of philosophy, religion, and theology. One of these is the problem of God as conceived in the hypothesis of a finite God (pp. x, 181ff.). Himself once an adherent of that idea, Ferré now announces his repudiation of it in favor of an existential faith in a God who combines sovereign power with complete goodness (pp. 181-185). He claims to go beyond the position of synoptic coherence as developed by Edgar S. Brightman to that of a theological coherence dominated by what is described as the "reflexively superspective" (pp. 150 ff., 200, *passim*). Not much space is devoted to the problem of evil which precipitates the issue of a finite God. The reader is promised an extended discussion of that problem in the next volume, already completed in the first draft (p. xii). The present book deals primarily with existential methodology.

To grasp the existential coherence of faith and reason certain basic concepts are introduced, some of them not common in theology: logical tendency, psychological tendency, actualization, concretion, existential, selective ideal, selective actual, existential ultimate, dynamic self-verification, right reason, right religion, and reflexive superspective. New meanings are suggested for old terms like *religion, truth, need, faith,* and *theology.* In the early pages of the book more consistent care is given to the definition of terms than in the later portions of the discussion. In the use of all these terms the author is constantly pressing forward to an affirmation of the religious ultimate which lies beyond any scientific or philosophical ultimate. The reader will gain much help if he reviews an earlier work, *The Christian Faith,* while studying this one. The content of that straightforward exposition is presupposed by this more complicated treatise. Some of the issues, half-hidden in the former volume's treatment of the "religious ultimate," are here boldly exposed.

But though Ferré treats of methodology at length, he apparently fails to present an adequate statement of his essential psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics. Without these the reader is likely to find the discussion truncated in its argument and even confused. Existentialists, we may say, are not excused from saying "epistemological grace." Therefore, despite the profound learning and religiosity of the author and the deep and moving concern for spiritual reality which he conveys, his existential confession lacks technical perfection and final persuasion. One misses the thorough presentation of constructive theoretical foundations which one finds, for example, in F. R. Tennant's treatment of faith and cognition in *Philosophical Theology.*

The book comprises four chapters and two appendices. There is a progression of argument suggested by the chapter headings: "Religion and Reason," "The Circle of Science," "The Circle of Philosophy," "The Circle of Religion." The chapter on science is strong. Valuable are the outlines of thirteen logical and psychological tendencies of scientific methods which prevent their users from arriving at truth. These points extending over forty pages are exceedingly well done and merit praise for their philosophical understanding. At the same time one must note two serious limitations, the failure to appreciate constructively the living spirit of scientific enterprise and the restriction of the treatment primarily to physical science and quantitative measurement. Psychological and social sciences together with the qualitative approach of clinical research would require somewhat different criticism. The treatment of philosophy is richly suggestive and loaded with brilliant insights. But here, again, in the interest of promoting the existential position, the dispraise of philosophy rests on a too restricted view of its function and upon a too intellectualistic view of reason. In the chapter on religion we are offered a significantly philosophical essay. Once more we are offered a wealth of material, but we are also given a confusion of theology and religion as the instrument of interpretation. In Appendix A the word *religion* is used for the same entity which is designated elsewhere as theology. The technical blunder is serious since it implicates his whole methodology. Had he clearly differentiated theology from religion, many ambiguities would have been removed.

Ferré's theology is existential. That much disputed word requires some illustrative sentences: "Theology is through and through existential, that is, completely concerned as unavoidable whole-response with the question of man's nature and destiny in relation to what is most important and most real" (p. 113). Existential means "that the whole person is involved critically and costlingly in the thinking. The whole life is at stake" (p. 132). "From the existential point of view . . . our origins and their meanings have naturally first claim since these have to do with answers to our most insistent clamoring for the why of things, why we are, what this is all about" (p. 158). In contrast to speculative systems which stress reason primarily, the existential ground of thought is whole-thinking which "requires the deepest passions, as well as intellect and will" (p. 205). Existential thought identifies the "most high" with the "most real" and grounds this claim in man's "need for an adequate authority and motivation" (p. 206). It also grounds thought in terms of the "end of our process," that is, from the faith in the ultimate victory over the problems of evil which beset us. "We need this sense of the sovereignty of the highest good" (p. 210). Existential thinking is thus depth-thinking which satisfies "the needs of the whole man," a whole-reaction which is whole-surrender (p. 213). In other words, existential thought is really faith, faith fraught with decision.

The existential decision, which is faith, has several phases. The first phase "is the experience of the wrongness of our actual situation" (p. 220). The second aspect stresses "the ideal as objectively real" rather than the "independent power of the man of faith" (p. 221). In the third phase man confronts the absolute demand of ultimate reality upon him and his world, as over against merely finding an ally in ultimate reality. "The man of faith comes to feel that both he and his actual world are irretrievably in the power of a Reality which decisively controls his life and efforts" (p. 222). In this personal adjustment he now knows that of himself he can do little permanent good, and therefore seeks to make himself a channel for Reality rather than its source, its servant rather than its master (*loc. cit.*). From the above we may conclude that existential for Ferré means faith as a living decision

embracing the whole man in the light of a personal surrender to the decision that the most high (as valuation) is the most real (sovereign metaphysical power).

The above brief exposition of existential will illuminate some of the outstanding issues of the book, two of which we shall briefly pursue, the contrast between philosophy and theology and the nature of truth. Ferré seeks to differentiate theology and philosophy in such a way as will not repudiate reason, will in fact include all the knowledge of truth which the methods of reason can provide, but which will, nevertheless, grant to theology the higher station of existential decision and faith. In the circle of philosophy we find three main standards, inclusiveness (p. 115), coherence (p. 116), and objectivity (p. 117). Philosophy seeks to understand meanings and relations in the light of the whole. Religion, like philosophy, interprets life inclusively and coherently, but it is more subjective, whereas philosophy is objective (p. 121). Then, too, theology not only has a different function, growing out of the subjective depths of whole response, but it has different "actual standards of truths." The contents of the coherence differ. On this distinction hangs one of the major theses of the book.

Philosophy is the coherent interpretation of the totality of our temporal experience (p. 122), of the here and now, or of the actual. From this standpoint God may be viewed as finite. From the perspective of religion, however, in which are combined "completely the most high and the most real," the centre of interpretation is the finished process, as indicated by the highest instance within it (p. 123). Ferré conceives of philosophical thought as coherent with the "here and now actual," but of theological thought as coherent with "the highest selective actual within the process, pointing beyond itself to what is more real than itself as an aggregative whole, to what is here only partially real, and therefore not yet realized in any fullness." Philosophy with its emphasis on rational knowledge gives partial coherence; theology through faith has an "ideal coherence anticipatorially attained." In summary: "The difference is between the total attainment or realization of the most high, the completion of the coherence of the fully best, and any standard of coherence which is rooted in the process that we now know" (p. 123). Theology lives by faith, and faith is the vision, "suggested but not verified by the nature of the process," of the final full realization of the purposes of our process (p. 125).

The standpoint of theology is thus a "reflexive superspective," which along with four others marks out the characteristic standards of religion. These are the selective ideal (p. 145), the selective actual (p. 148), the existential ultimate (p. 149), and dynamic self-verification (p. 152). There is space only to stress the meaning of "reflexive superspective." Superspective is perspective taken from the "most high." "It is the regulative pattern, the dominant motif, the molding form, the all-shaping principle of interpretation. It is the center of the focus of religious seeing" (p. 151). The reflexive refers to the faith that the process is guided by the superspective and in the end is to conform completely to it. "The process is to be understood in the light of the superspective having become all-dominant and all-inclusive so that what is now contrary to it is seen reflexively, retrospectively, from that point of attainment, as incidentally instrumental and as ultimately unreal. Only that partakes of reality within the actual, in any eminent sense, which accords with the superspective" (p. 151).

Ferré's argument invites several brief comments. First, the discussion is confused by a merging of the terms, *religion* and *theology*. Secondly, the disjunction between philosophy and theology is technically unfaithful to philosophy and to the accepted definitions of theology. Philosophies, like personal idealism, have combined

the use of a key factor like personality (Personality is the key to reality) and then have made teleology one of the basic categories of personality, thus making use of a "reflexive superspective." Taken radically, the "here and now actual" is but the specious present. Any theism is teleological and hence has a superspective which deals with the present reflexively, that is, from the hypothesis of what the end of the purpose is taken to be, whether finished or indefinitely unfinished. The five so-called characterists of theology apply in principle to every purposive philosophy of religion.

Ferré quite frankly denies that philosophy can be existential. This is the exclusive hall-mark of theology. We may ask whether this does not claim both too much and too little. Is all existential response theology? He seems to say so. But shall we call the concrete unity of theory and practice emphasized by Marx theology? On the other hand, if theology essentially requires the full religious dedication of the passionate depths of man's subjective nature, then how shall we designate the great systems of theology whose validity cannot be genetically established? Can there be, on this basis, any ecumenical Christian theology? Are we not driven into the individualism of confessional privacy? Waving aside these difficulties, we may ask how Ferré's existentialism differs from Kant's "primacy of the practical reason," especially as reinterpreted by Knudson and Brightman. Shall we call the theory of the primacy of the practical reason philosophy and the practice of it theology?

Ferré's method too easily disposes of the facts of evil and the idea of a finite God. It will be fairer to Ferré to write the criticism of this problem after his second volume has appeared. However, it seems that despite all references to coherence and rational wholeness, theology is free to select from the actual process what is taken to be ideally perfect (like the Christ of faith), to posit it as the teleological goal of process, to link it with the idea of sovereign power, and then to reject whatever does not produce this end result as unreal. Such a procedure invites the suggestion of special pleading. It fails to appreciate the law of consequences and the reality of present human tragedy. The unreality of abstract perfectionism and utopianism hangs over such existentialism. Although the author repudiates both of these ideas, his position has not yet been inherently cleansed of them. He insists that in the dynamic self-verification of religion, faith has an historical body as well as eternal spirit. But this insight is not coherently related to the transcendently perfect. The "most high" is in danger of being too impersonal, not immanent enough to sustain men in suffering and to redeem them from sin.

We have already referred to Ferré's discussion of truth. The major difficulty is its ambiguity and careless usage. In order to bring out the problems the reviewer is italicizing a number of words in quotations from the book. Truth, we are told, is a "full perspective" (p. 3), which means "to understand our neighbors' point of view in order to correct and enlarge our own by what they see" (p. 4). A different conception is introduced on p. 10: "truth is the right *interpreter* of that to which we respond." Truth must never be "reduced to method," for "the right process *in man* must not be substituted for the right *interpretation* of what is outside man." But Ferré holds at once to both a subjective and an objective perspective regarding truth. "Truth," he writes, "probably is as much of a *verb* as a *noun*, an acting as a being, at least some combination of the two, since what we meet is action. Truth is *what* we must *tell* concerning that to which we react. But the truth we are after is the *thing we meet* and we must never presuppose that this is the same as our process of *interpretation*" (pp. 9-10). The subjective traits of truth seem to include the follow-

ing: a) all truth is living"; b) it is found in the "fullest, purest whole-surrender to what is most important and most real; c) it is an active right relation of whole response; d) it is of the "inward parts;" and e) it is "wholeness and sincerity before what is really there" (p. 12). On the objective side, truth is "seeing what is really there"; it is the "right reading of what is out there" (p. 21). "Truth so far *as we can reach it,* is *that which* cannot be knocked down by those who are both fully honest and truly competent" (p. 98). Both subjective and objective aspects are stressed in this proposition: "Truth is refusing to hide one's eyes from the real difference that there may be between what is most important to us here and now, and what is really there acting as it really does" (p. 12).

Difficult as the above passages are to reconcile with a clear definition of truth, they seem less ambiguous than the following: "Truth may go *beyond right reason* even while *using* it as fully as possible both critically and creatively" (p. 23). "Truth is ever basically a faith judgment inasmuch as the ultimate cannot be proved" (p. 124). The resultant ambiguity comes to this that "truth, in the last analysis, is an existential ultimate" (p. 124). It is confusing to read in this connection that truth "must be a combination of pointing and of going that way," of "growing meaning and of realization of meaning," a "dynamic relation between realization and realizability wherein, though the most high be ever so much seen to be the most real, it must nevertheless also become increasingly *known* as such" (p. 201). Thus, truth must be actual, made of the stuff of history, and applicable to life. As an existential ultimate, truth must be "something to which we must bow because it grips us with the intensity of a mystic intuition, subduing us" (p. 207). It would appear that truth and faith are finally indistinguishable.

Despite its difficulties *Faith and Reason* is an important book. It rides the storm and cross currents of contemporary theology with a mignificent spirit of courage, enquiry, concern, and positive affirmation. It reflects the enormous vitality of its author's religious experience.

WALTER G. MUELDER

Conversations with an Unrepentant Liberal, by Julius Seelye Bixler, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946, pp. x, 113, $2.

One should admire a Liberal in these days who stands by his guns. And anyone who knows President Bixler will admire him anyhow, not only for his support of a name that just now "lies low," but even more for the charm of his writing and the sincerity of his character.

In a very ingenious way he has presented his case in the form of a discussion between two reincarnated Academicians, who review their ancient and Platonic friendship in a meeting at the North Station in Boston and a trip together via Cambridge and Providence to New Haven. This is as good a locale as could be chosen, though it might seem limited to a somewhat sophisticated horizon. They spend their pleasant journey discussing the relation of liberalism to religion, education, and democracy in these disturbed and difficult days.

The two characters are Simmias, who appears as a disillusioned liberal and remarks that he is "rather bitter over the liberals because they claim to be so intellectual and to know so much when actually they understand so little." That quotation will serve to characterize his position all the way through the journey. The unrepentant liberal is Cebes, who takes the blasts of his friend with equanimity and who refuses to abandon his concern for human reason and man's unchanging search for truth.

Dr. Bixler should be commended for the frankness with which he states the

case against the liberal. He spares no punches from the other side, and you start the book by wondering if he is going to be able to defend himself against himself. He does it mainly by his uncompromising espousal of human reason. He refuses to abandon or discredit it. Perhaps the best thing we can say for the Simmias side is that the semideification of reason has had a rather disappointing record in human history. The goddess is forever getting dethroned. Reason, says Simmias, has a very "small area in which to work." Cebes maintains that this small area is exceedingly precious and that in this day of all days it should be defended. He is at that point particularly impatient with neoörthodoxy which is a good illustration of the limited horizon. These newly fashioned conservatives are to be sure vocal and intellectually impressive, but they do not speak for the vast secular antiliberalism everywhere dominant in the political and social chaos of our age. The neoörthodox might be described a bit unfairly perhaps but, nevertheless, somewhat aptly as a minority of highbrow fundamentalists.

The best chapter in the little book is the one on dynamic religion. Here Dr. Bixler sees his problem with great clarity. Since the liberal cannot be dogmatic, he had better be dynamic. Therein lies his hope. Further there are places where he might be more definite as well as dynamic. "Don't you believe in revelation?" asks Simmias at one very interesting point in their discussion. "Let me ask you this," says Cebes, as he parries the question, and off they go again with their qualifying comments. If the liberal is to be dynamic, there are times where he must be willing to say Yes or No, which is something that the liberal invariably finds difficult.

Here is what seems to me the real contribution of the book. Liberalism is one of the needed leavens in the great seething mass of modern humanity. We need the liberal all the more because of the blinding forces that seem to crush and discredit him. If the liberal can be unrepentant and humble at the same time, as we can well believe Dr. Bixler to be, we should be grateful to him for defending his position. We always need the liberal most when we appreciate him the least. If we remind him that we must not abandon our faith for the sake of reason, he reminds us that we must not abandon our reason for the sake of our faith, even though it remains forever true that the pilgrim walks by faith and not by sight.

E. C. HERRICK

Discerning the Signs of the Times, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York, Scribner, 1946, pp. x, 194, $2.50.

In this volume of sermonic essays Dr. Niebuhr has found his best medium of expression. Distrustful of reason and system, he does not seem at home in the long, sustained argument of a close-knit logical treatise. But here the pungent phrase, the flashing insight that alights momentarily like a seagull and is gone again, the startling paradox, all combine to make delightful sketches of religious truth.

The general thesis of the essays may be stated in words taken from pages 53-54:

> Since the moral and spiritual resources to achieve a stable society in global terms are not yet available, we must be prepared to live for decades, and possibly for centuries, in heart-breaking frustrations, somewhat eased by small advances toward the desired goal. It will not be easy to live in this age between the ages without being tempted to despair. Richer resources of faith will be required than those which the liberal culture of the past two centuries has lived by. Its faith grew out of an age of easy achievements and few frustrations; and has little conception of the tragic character of history.

Before looking at the faith he here proposes, let us pause to note that the era of which he speaks witnessed the Industrial Revolution and its appalling abuses;

the American and French Revolutions and the frustrating aftermaths of both; the painful struggles for freedom in Ireland and Italy, in Mexico and Russia and China, in Greece and Czecho-Slovakia, ending often in terror and bitterness. Was this our "age of easy achievements and few frustrations"?

Humor and faith, he tells us in a chapter reminding one of Kierkegaard, are alternative reactions to the incongruities of life. We can laugh at the minor incongruities, but the deep contradictions are "no laughing matter"; they lead to melancholy from which faith alone can rescue us. Only as we acknowledge our inability to encompass them can we apprehend the meaning of the human drama, and then we confront the mystery of evil, imposing and intractable.

God, the ultimate power, appears powerless in history. Having given man freedom, he must redeem man not by overwhelming power but by "the weakness of love"; for he can reach sin only through forgiveness. So Christ appears in history powerless to resist the tragedy of the cross, a suffering servant who seems to belie the power of the Creator. Theology has never, for all its refinements of Christology, fathomed this relation of the Father to the Son in the redemptive process.

And man continues on his way caught in the perpetual dilemmas of his temporal existence: unable to be just without being vengeful, his righteous indignation clouded with egotism, aware at every moment of achievement that he has a higher obligation, caught in the currents of his world but yet transcending history. This is all familiar to readers of Niebuhr, who know that in any healing ointment he will dig till he finds a fly.

The book is more than a series of theological sermons, however. Current social problems are dealt with too: our proper attitude toward our vanquished enemies, the American messianic complex, the anxieties and pride of the Big Four, the weakness of universal brotherhood, the risks of Christian unity and ecclesiastical egotism, the stupidity of trying to return to a system of "free enterprise." But in his suggestive way he continually passes back and forth between the social and the theological problems.

The danger in this fruitful ambivalence is that he may subordinate his analysis of sociological issues to his theological system in such a way as to oversimplify the social treatment while elaborating the theological refinements. His psychological penetration is undeniable in the moral realm; but his historical analyses are often far too simplified, as I indicated at the beginning. He seems also to have been led by the German theological distinction between "orders of creation" and "orders of redemption" into a dangerous disjunction between creation and history; and he seems to be aware of this risk (p. 144), but leaves the difficult problem of the continuity of man and nature with a mere concession that is not developed.

History as a part of nature, nature as an expression of divine activity, and reason as our best though imperfect tool for relating man to history and to nature—these are aspects of thought to which he has not yet given the attention they deserve.

This is the best volume to suggest to any layman who wants an introduction to Niebuhr's thought. It is readable and clear.

EDWIN E. AUBREY

New Testament Life and Literature, by Donald W. Riddle and Harold H. Hutson, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, ©1946, pp. 263, $3.

This is what would have been called a generation ago a New Testament "Introduction." For some reason recently authors or their publishers do not like that term. The usual subjects of introduction are here presented but somewhat differently organized. The first chapters describe freshly the background of secular history and

culture and of pagan and Jewish religion. An appendix deals with the leading ideas of the New Testament, showing the variety and development of thought about God, Jesus, man's relation to God, and the church. In between, the New Testament books are considered, grouped in chapters according to their general date. The last chapter deals with canon, text, and translation.

Both of the authors have studied and taught at the University of Chicago. Though their bibliography (pp. 234-250) is unusually full and representative, in their text they follow the trends of the "Chicago school," whether the publications of Case and Goodspeed and their pupils are actually cited or not. Thus one chapter rehearses Goodspeed's theory about "Ephesians" and the collection of Paul's letters. Another deals with Hebrews, I Peter, and Revelation as all occasioned by Roman persecution under Domitian, or in the case of I Peter possibly under Trajan. They have not adopted the policy generally of mentioning opposing views though in one instance they have allowed themselves a footnote with the delightful understatement: "Not all scholars agree that Ephesians was a letter of introduction to the Pauline corpus" (p. 177). Dr. Riddle writes the section on Paul, following the lines of his book *Paul, Man of Conflict.* Dr. Hutson's most substantial contribution is three chapters on the career of Jesus and two on the Synoptic gospels as literature. Some repetition is evident between these sections. They present clearly and sensibly the position of form criticism. This, like the simplicity and clarity of the whole book, makes it usable for the purpose for which it was intended, namely, a text for students as well as a readable account for the general reader who wishes to obtain an uncontroversial summary of one tenable view of New Testament origins. One of the chapters draws heavily upon the *Message of Jesus Christ,* by Dibelius, including its English translation of gospel passages. In their other quotations of scripture, which in any case are not numerous, they usually follow Goodspeed. He is not responsible, however, for the rendering of John 20:31 on p. 191.

Among the emphases of the volume is the non-Jewish character both of Paul and of the gospels, with the consequent iterated suggestion that Christianity early became a religion of salvation over against ethical Judaism. Other repeated points and more questionable ones are the view that Christianity was in difficulty because of a status of being "illegal" or "illicit" in some Roman judicial sense (*e.g.,* pp. 180, 226), that Hebrews is allegorical as well as Alexandrian (pp. 182, 184), and that the Gospel of John is a product not only of mysticism but of intellectualism (p. 192; "intellectual element" p. 191 *bis,* "quasi-philosophical" p. 193, *cf.* "intelligentsia," "educated," "intelligent" p. 54). Other passages that I have queried are: "The conviction of an especial relationship to God is pictured by Mark as growing in Jesus" (p. 92); "cataleptic" of Paul (p. 107); "faith in Hebrews means . . . the belief in a definite body of doctrine" (p. 184); the Thessalonians "ceased work to await" the end of the world (p. 122). Surely that is no necessary inference, and it is strange further that a book that shows so little regard for the traditional way of dating Paul's letters should take for granted the priority of First to Second Thessalonians, and the unity of First Corinthians.

The reader for whom the book is intended will welcome its clear and unquestioning interpretation of New Testament life and literature, but unless otherwise instructed he will not know how much is still unsettled. In the plain picture of conditions in the environment of nascent Christianity the authors are not only equally up to date but on surer ground. Even outside the controversial fields readers may be misled into thinking that the prohibition of animate art is in the first commandment (p. 17), that the temple fell in A.D. 132 (p. 27), that II Enoch is earlier than

IV Ezra (p. 184), or that Ignatius wrote to seven churches as well as to Polycarp (p. 209), or that the New Testament text owned by Chester Beatty is one papyrus and not several (p. 214).

HENRY J. CADBURY

Nature and Values, by Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury, ©1945, pp. 171, $1.50.

In his preface the author states, "The germ of the thought of the present work is found in my chapter on 'A Christian View of Nature' in the Merrick Lectures for 1943, *Christian Bases of World Order*." In it he attempts to overcome the dualism of fact and value that plagues the thought of contemporary man. To be sure, there always have been, and always will be, polarities in our thought and action; but the sharp cleavage between our "disciplined knowledge of fact" and our "arbitrary and subjective feelings about value" is the result of false thinking about the character of reality.

Much of the difficulty lies in the reigning conception of the world of nature. One would expect in such an important concept clarity and precision of definition. Unfortunately, the definition of nature by those who are most naturalistic in their point of view is lacking in both these attributes. The author, therefore, is constrained to seek a clear-cut meaning for the term. He identifies nature with the world of sense objects and defines it as "the external source of sense experience," "the realm disclosed to us through our sense perception."

Over against the world of nature is the world of personality. Here "conscious self-experience" is primary. It is characteristic of the human person that his thinking seeks coherence; and it is out of this demand for coherence that he finds an ordered objective reference for the chaotic sensations he experiences. The world of personality, then, is "fundamental to all knowledge and existence; it is a richer world than that of physical nature; it interacts constantly with nature; it is an invisible world; a world of purpose; a world of self-identifying, private individuals; a social world; and a world of conflict."

The world of values is an integral part of the world of personality, "for all value is personal experience that is respected." The problem for mankind is that of bringing order out of the chaos of conflicting values by securing increasing agreement on the precedence of values and of building a society in which the conservation of these values is a primary consideration. The two values on which all other values depend are truth and respect for personality, or love.

From this position the author examines the efforts of science to discover a basis for world unification and finds them wanting. He finds the solution in his own philosophy of personalism. Whether one can accept this philosophy in its totality or not, the argument is a searching critique of the superficialities of much contemporary philosophizing that claims for its conclusions the certainty associated with the reasoning of exact science. Many aspects of his solution have validity quite apart from their personalistic matrix. Throughout the book, the exposition is marked by generosity of spirit, exact scholarship, and clarity of expression.

J. HOWARD HOWSON

Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People, by Max Weinreich, New York, Yiddish Scientific Institute, 1946, pp. 291, no price.

In 1939, nine and one-half millions Jews lived in Europe; six million, almost two-thirds, were murdered by the Nazis and their satellites. A three abreast marching

column of the resurrected dead would extend from the sources to the delta of the Mississippi river.

In the Hitlerian treatment of the Jew, seven phases may be recognized: The conception of the plan to use Judaism as scapegoat, to 1933; the transition to the Nüremberg decrees "for the protection of German blood and honor," 1935; the pogrom wave and attempt to establish global fifth columns, to 1938; planning the annihilation of the Jew, 1938 to September, 1939; enslavement, starvation, and occasional violence, to 1941; the decimation of East European Jewry through mass murder, to 1942; the murder of millions of Jews in crematoria, to the end of the armed resistance of the Nazis.

All this is well known. But how much was Hitler aided by his brain-trust? The answer of this research is, "as time progressed the bulk of university scholars, of scholarly periodicals, of publishing houses was entirely Nazified." Cultural anthropologists, philosophers, historians, jurists, economists, geographers, demographers, theologians, linguists, medical men—all mentioned by name—and the anonymous engineers who so carefully constructed the gas chambers and death furnaces helped Hitler to his goal. The index of persons and institutions listed fills twenty-six pages from John Amery hanged in London, December 19, 1945, for high treason and Mufti Amin-al-Husseini to theologians like the following: Bertram of Giessen, Brachman of Halle, Brockelmann of Breslau, Euler of Giessen, Gruehn of Berlin, Grundman of Jena, Heckel of Munich, Hempel of Berlin, Hirsch of Goettingen, Kittel of Tuebingen and Vienna, Vogelsang of Koenigsberg and Giessen, Wendel of Breslau, Werdemann of Dortmund. Thirty great Universities, eight of them beyond Germany, were involved—*O tempora! O mores!*

Suppose we take just one sample in order to trace the rapid disintegration of German theological scholarship under Nazi suggestion and compulsion—Gerhard Kittel of Tuebingen and Vienna. He was one of the first university professors openly to join the Nazis in their attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe. He began very mildly, pointing out that the emancipation of the Jews had been a mistake, that the Jew should be kept in his place, that the "National Socialist Labor Party supported a positive Christianity." He observed that the Jewish question must be built upon a religious foundation and given a Christian interpretation. While it was not pleasant to see suffering, "we ought not to become soft." In 1933, he thought it inexpedient to kill all Jews, for this would "not mean mastery of the situation." In 1936, he was appointed a member of the Reich's Research Department for the Jewish Question (p. 48), and in 1939, published *Die historischen Vorausssetzungen der juedischen Rassenmischung,* in which he argued that the Jews are not a race but a race mixture which must be removed to make way for the German race (pp. 56, 82). Rosenberg complained that Kittel was not yet "entirely free of denominational and theological reminiscenses" (p. 98). Kittel soon did better, by "proving" that the Talmud declared every non-Jew a stranger and, hence, the Nazi disfranchisement of the Jews of Germany in 1933 was justified (p. 215). He declared the Jews were opposing Germany's greatness and quoted Hitler as to their doom. Then in 1942, he eased the Nazi conscience by alleging that in the Talmud the killing of the Gentile explicitly and on principle was declared *straffrei* (not punishable): "The problem of right or wrong does not exist for Talmudic thinking in the case of political murder of non-Jews; the question can only be one of expediency, whether it is going to lead to success" (p. 216). Next year, he collaborated with Eugen Fischer to advance that great scholar's deterioration by publishing *Das antike Weltjudentum: Tatsachen, Texte, Bilder,* containing "Always at all times, in the first century as in the twen-

tieth, world Jewry is the dream of exclusive world domination on earth and in the hereafter" (p. 217)! This study seems to have paved the way for the fearful executions not long delayed to insure a "new spiritual Europe." Kittel was also to be invited to the lavishly planned Cracow International Anti-Jewish Congress of September, 1944, with guaranteed "pure" brothels for foreign guests, whose purpose was to reach the intellectual strata of the European peoples not yet won over to the full support of the Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda. *Wie tief ist Gerhard Kittel gesunken!*

Probably the scoop of this volume is the publication of the document in which one of the coadjutors of *Der Fuehrer* refers to the anti-Jewish persecution as a "secret weapon" of Hitler (p. 235). Nazism had found the "old anti-Semitic material of the period of the struggle [the Nazi struggle] for power purely polemical and unreliable." A new type of propaganda was needed to arouse the flagging German spirit on the home front and to goad on the outer front, especially the western world. "World Jewry" must be fought and no one on the home front must be overlooked. In spite of the millions cremated, Germany was not winning a total victory against the Jew!

> Apart from this group, however, all circles of the population, representatives of the intellectual life, well-known poets and scholars, actors and film stars, painters and musicians, generals, bearers of the Knights' Cross, engineers, officials, retailers, housewives, and former functionaries of the SPD [Social Democratic Party] and other antinational-socialist parties, should be drawn into this struggle (p. 238).

Will American anti-Semitic organizations take notice!

Hitler's Professors contains forty-one chapters and is in three parts: Planning and Preparation; Large Scale Experimenting; Execution of the Program. Every aspect of Hitler's anti-Jewish agitation receives attention, such as, racial science, *Refolkung*, the Jew as demon, ritual murder, death factories, anti-Jewish research in Germany and abroad. If you have fainting spells, this horror narrative will put you in coma: "The Jewish quarters in the East which are still in existence are only a transitional measure necessitated by the times; the final goal before us is complete spatial separation, the EXTINCTION OF THE JEWS FROM EUROPE" (p. 202). The documentation is in 473 notes. The apparatus also includes more than thirty pages of facsimile reproduction of excerpts. Unfortunately there is no general index. Of course, it would have added fifty pages to the book. Also, one feels that the story begins *in medias res*. But Nazism will never be understood, until *Volksreligion* from at least 1850 to 1919 is scientifically studied. Nazism was culmination and consequence, not beginning.

Is the following from the *Deutscher Wochendienst*, October 28, 1944, reflection of American politics or anticipation of what we are yet to hear?

> The Roosevelt group is the old Wilson group re-enforced by new Jews and profiteers, to a large extent already strongly marked by bolshevism. . . . USA democracy by its very essence always will bring to the fore corruptionists, speculators, war-hawks, and agitation profiteers. . . . *Avoid*, openly expressing the hatred against the people (disgusting as the Yankees are to us, the point for us is to drive a wedge between them and the Roosevelt group in order to divide leadership and people over there).

This research establishes beyond contradiction the boast of Professor Max Clara: "Today we can proudly state that scholarship contributed its share to the success of the Fuehrer's great plans." That was written in 1942. Would German scholarship feel so proud of its sordid work today?

CONRAD HENRY MOEHLMAN

Best Sermons: 1946 Edition, edited by G. Paul Butler, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. xx, 324, $2.75.

The first volume of *Best Sermons* was the 1944 edition. This, the 1946 edition, follows the pattern of the first and is to be followed, in turn, by an annual volume. Statistics about the collection are both interesting and contributory to any judgment of the contents. G. Paul Butler has held five pastorates and is now a religious editor and book reviewer for a New York newspaper. For this volume 252 preaching denominations were invited to summit a sermon or sermons. From the 5,674 sermons submitted 52 were selected for publication. Eighteen denominations, seventeen states, and five countries are represented. The sermons were preached either to a congregation or over the radio, between Easter 1944 and September 30, 1945. The three major faiths—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish—are represented. Similarly, these faiths were represented on the advisory committee of nine, who helped in the final choice. The sermons are grouped according to subject matter: Christ, Christian life, Christian religion, the church, God (one sermon), morals, vision, and so on. Obviously these are conventional and at times almost arbitrary.

What the book seeks to do is best stated in the first paragraph of the editor's Introduction (p. xvii):

> *Best Sermons* seeks to present a cross section of the best spiritual thought and preaching of our time, with sermons of such universal appeal that they could have been delivered in any church. All of the fifty-two sermons were chosen for their religious message, homiletic value and application to the needs of men of our day. Each sermon is in the preacher's own words, with the full denominational flavor of his church.

This detailed description indicates the extent of the search for the "best sermons" and the care taken in their selection. One does not readily see how much more could have been done, remembering that this was not a contest or a prize selection. The result is, therefore, a worthy volume produced by a commendable procedure and a true cross section of preaching.

The first observation about a collection of sermons such as this might be made without reading the volume: It presents the liberal and the conservative in thought; the shades of faith are sometimes very distinct, especially that of the Catholic church; the conventional types of expository, textual, and topical sermons are all here. Reading the sermons, however, reveals the very pleasing fact that all the variations may be honestly and forthrightly expressed without an irascible belligerency that has no place in a religious experience. Of course the editor would not have permitted such a display of discourtesy and ill manners, but on the positive side the result is noteworthy.

Also, as one might expect, the styles of the sermons vary. As the editor remarks of Dean Sperry (and substantially in other comments) there is a distinction between "words written to be read and written to be spoken" (p. 37). As one reads these sermons, it is often difficult to come anywhere near the experience that must have accompanied their hearing in the setting of a church or synagogue or commencement. There is a difference between these two forms that presents an almost insurmountable barrier to either one passing to the other. One feels this distinctly even when reading a sermon that has been preached to hearers; it raises the old question whether sermons that were preached should be published.

It may be noted, incidentally, that there is a striking lack of literary references. Not that the preacher should lard his efforts with the mimicked words of his superiors, but that in fifty-two sermons by fifty-two preachers there ought to be a greater recognition of the invaluable support that is to be found in the world's literature. The sermons are frequently weak in their illustrations, and by illustration is meant, "that which throws light upon" the subject. They are too often unnecessarily pedestrian.

Certainly Christmas and Easter are the great days of the Christian church. We rightly expect great sermons on the very heart and dynamic of Christianity. The "best sermon" in each case is disappointing. Certainly exposition is one of our great present-day needs. Is the one sermon of that subject the "best" preached during the year? By it the whole painstaking and sincere liberal exposition of the Bible is flouted. Perhaps the editor has been choosing the sermons on the basis of quality and then dividing them according to an arbitrary judgment of subject matter. Why not decide on the subject to be presented and then select the best sermon or sermons under each topic?

Most impressive and most important is the total outlook on the sermons and the preaching of today. It is trite to say that it is basically unlike those of other days; it is valuable to note the unlikeness. Dr. Sockman, in a stimulating foreword on the character of preaching, characterises our age as one of bewilderment, religious ignorance, and specialization. True, but let us add perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic: intellectualism. The attempts to meet these qualities are everywhere evident, for this is a volume of alert, contemporaneous sermons. The method employed may be questioned, however.

To many preachers today are indistinguishable from the newspaper columnist and the magazine essayist. Religion, they seem to feel, must be made credible, Christianity acceptable, and the Christian life a revelation of the kind of life we have been living all along, touched up here and there with a few bright colors from the revelation-palette. Christianity must be made acceptable to the mind, persuasive to the heart, and imperative to the will. All this is true, but we do not achieve it by bringing theology down to the level of the commonplace, but by raising the commonplace to the higher level of theology. (For "theology" substitute "religion" if the sentence has more appeal that way.) Intellectualism has still a stronghold on the pulpit; we are still too much concerned with correcting the ideas of those who differ, instead of being concerned with helping, by the grace of God, those who are weak, or indifferent, or confused, or just plain wicked. Preaching has fallen into disrepute when it became a polemic. It has been restored—and become restorative—when it became an evangel.

Thus, while these are really the "best sermons" preached during the year, they indicate very clearly the temper of our present-day preaching, which is not on a too high level, and they indicate also that we are in need of a time of great preaching. We have done well the task for our day; but some have mistaken the day.

ROBERT E. KEIGHTON

Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature, by J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, ©1946, pp. x, 128, $3.

As the title indicates, the theological problem here is that of revelation; the area of investigation is limited to the Jewish wisdom literature, which includes, among the canonical books, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, certain of the Psalms, and, outside the canon, the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, I Esdras, Tobit, Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon, the letter of Aristeas, IV Maccabees, and the Pirke Aboth. The schools of wisdom literature in both Egypt and Babylonia, of which the Hebrews were aware, and upon which they were in a measure dependent, are described in some detail.

Mr. Rylaarsdam sees in the wisdom literature a debate over the matters of authority and revelation and, when the literature is arranged chronologically, a progression from a humanistic point of view to a view which might be termed supernaturalistic. The debate opens, he points out, with the assertion that the

natural endowment of the mind, the human reason, is sufficient to get at life's meaning; it closes with the notion that wisdom is attained only by God's special gift. Each of these two positions in this long debate covering a period of six centuries is held constantly in tension by an awareness of the possible validity of the claims of the other view. This tension which existed between the claims of nature and of grace, of freedom and of authority, resulted in benefits to both groups of claimants and ultimately to real progress in the theological struggle.

The first chapter deals with the context of Hebrew wisdom in the literature of the more ancient schools in adjacent cultures, which supplied the material to which the Hebrew genius gave the stamp of its own peculiar character. The second chapter, "The Nationalization of Wisdom," describes the process by which a movement in Israel, which in the beginning was careful to disassociate itself from the particularistic emphases of national religion, ultimately became at the time of Ben Sira a servant of the distinctively Jewish institutions. "The Hope of Wisdom," the third chapter, treats of those optimistic sages of an earlier period who believed, like the prophets, in a world governed by reason and morality, in rewards and punishments. These early writers on wisdom never lost that human self-confidence about the capacity of the human mind to discover the demands of God. Nor were these men lacking in religious faith; while for them there were no special gifts of grace, life itself with all its endowments was a gift of God. In time, however, this bold reliance upon natural means of acquiring wisdom gave way to caution. The idea of the divine initiative grows until men are led more and more to rely upon the law and upon prayer. Wisdom becomes the special gift of God and not a reward of honest search on the part of the human mind. In the fourth chapter the author deals with the two directions which the frustration of the earlier sages took, despair as seen in Ecclesiastes, and transcendent faith in the case of Job. These two books, Job and Ecclesiastes, represent a "last-stand effort to hold the wisdom movement to the rationalistic and natural methods with which it began." Finally an interesting chapter describes the movement in which the idea of wisdom was freed from the notion of law and annexed to the concept of spirit. This step availed to centre wisdom once again in human consciousness and experience and made it capable of creating new forms in each new situation.

There is on every side an increasingly loud cry for a criticism of the Bible which emphasizes its relevancy to contemporary life. Partisans in various schools have been ready to respond with work which supports their own bias. But here is a book which deals with the relevancy of a segment of biblical material with no special axe to grind. It is obvious that Mr. Rylaarsdam is no disinterested observer in the theological conflict; but his interest is that of a teacher anxious to make his researches, and those of his colleagues in the field, available to all camps. Happily he has succeeded without letting his enthusiasm for making the Bible relevant slip into the polemic of a partisan. We need more of just this kind of biblical theology. Mr. Rylaarsdam's work may well serve as a model for the kind of criticism which will be useful to the theologian as well as to the parish minister.

JAMES B. PRITCHARD

The Christian Future: The Modern Mind Outrun, by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, New York, Scribner, 1946, pp. xii, 248, $2.50.

This is a difficult book to summarize or to review. The chief reason is that it comes from a truly original and fertile mind. Professor Rosenstock is one of those writers who considers trivial what for most people is important and who

takes as fraught with tremendous significance what for many is commonplace. The result is a book that leaves its reader goggle-eyed much of the time. New ideas flash at him with a light that is nearly blinding. But it should be added that the flashes are intermittent and that the pattern they are supposed to reveal is not always easy to trace.

To the present reviewer Professor Rosenstock is strongest at the points he himself would regard of least importance and is less persuasive where he wishes above all to convince. As a "philosopher of culture," where, for example, he discusses the prudence and evasiveness of suburban life, the spiritual potentialities of the commuter, or the deep conflict in the postwar world between fighter and thinker, he is powerful. When he tries to back up his arguments with illustrations from Christian creeds and dogma and attempts as a theologian to make the appeal to revelation a last resort, his grip on what is relevant seems less secure.

The impression should not be given, however, that he throws no light on the problems of religion. Take this passage, for example, from p. 94: "If the Divine becomes known in our lives as the power of conquering death, it is something that can only happen to us in this or that particular moment of time; it is known as an *event*, never as an essence or a thing. And it can happen to us only in the midst of living, *after* death in some form—bereavement, nervous breakdown, loss of hopes—has come upon us."

The hint offered here that the deepest questions must be approached personally rather than intellectually runs through the entire book. It influences the author's treatment of his material especially in making him turn to his own experiences for explanations of the way truth works in life. When these experiences have to do with his relations to students they are especially apt. Some of his quotations from letters written by men in the service deserve to be widely known. There is space for only one in conclusion—from an infantryman (p. 241): "Those of us who have accepted death and come to life again many times will either have to find our moral equivalent for war or perish or degenerate."

J. S. BIXLER

The Apocryphal Literature, by Charles Cutler Torrey, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1945, pp. x, 151, $3.

The Apocryphal Literature is a compact introduction to the whole area of non-canonical Jewish literature produced during the Second Commonwealth. Torrey uses the term to include the *pseudepigrapha* as well as the writings traditionally called *apocryphal*. The book has two main sections. The first of these, and the briefer, treats the position of the synagogue and the church toward this Jewish literature from the time of its origin to the present period. The second section consists of articles on each of the several books included in the classification.

The treatment of the earlier literature must be read in terms of the positions assumed by Torrey in his *Ezra Studies*. The distinctive position assumed in this volume toward the apocryphal literature is the theory that most of the books were composed originally in Hebrew or Aramaic. Jewish, Palestinian authorities, Torrey alleges, ordered and effected the destruction of all the Semitic originals shortly after the fall of Jerusalem. The rejection of this literature, favored by Christians, was closely related to the ban upon the Aramaic literature of the primitive community, *i.e.*, the Aramaic gospels which Torrey assumes lie behind our present Greek texts. Scholars who dissent from Torrey's theory of gospel origins will undoubtedly challenge in detail and as a whole his theory of Semitic originals for the bulk of the apocryphal writings. If his position on the success of Jewish leadership in suppressing this literature be

granted, this means that in the darkest hour just after defeat Palestinian authorities possessed effective control, culturally speaking, throughout the Jewish world.

Such a theory once proved would demand a reëvaluation of the opposition which nascent Christianity must have faced when Jewish leaders were presumably much more powerful than after the destruction of Jerusalem. The view supported by Herford, for example, that throughout the Second Commonwealth Judaism continued to develop without serious breaks toward the Judaism of the Mishnah and that the cultural disruption effected by Roman arms only concentrated Jewish thought on hitherto dominant elements would require modification. In fact the radical reaction against forms of popular Judaism which Torrey desiderates would cast discredit on any of the later Jewish literature as a reflection of the Judaism of the late Second Commonwealth.

In the second section Torrey seeks to supply for each work discussed information about authorship, original audience and purpose, literary type and subsequent fortune. References to standard literature on each book are given. The articles on the "Lives of the Prophets" and the "Testament of Job" deal with books often neglected. First Esdras, Torrey affirms, is a fragment preserved only because of the originally non-Jewish story of the three guardsmen. The literary classifications and vignette summaries of the contents of the various books will prove helpful to all students. Because of the condensed style much of the text will prove difficult reading, but the mass of data which this style makes possible will be appreciated. Beginning students must be guided to discriminate between Torrey's presentation of facts and his emphatic arguments for particular theories where the proof adduced is much less than the certitude exhibited.

JAMES HARREL COBB

Foundations for Reconstruction, by Elton Trueblood, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. 109, $1.

Once again, with unique powers of insight, imagination, and literary felicity, Professor Trueblood has given us a "tract for the time" which both illumines one's gropings after the inner meanings of contemporary events and prompts to profounder plumbing of the issues. Like his earlier *The Predicament of Modern Man* (see review in the Crozer Quarterly, January, 1945), this little work is no less notable for freshness and charm of presentation than for clarity and succinctness of analysis.

The author has elected to build his proposals upon what are at first thought unpromising foundations—the threadbare truisms of the Ten Commandments. But, from those familiar axioms of private morality, he has drawn principles with direct and vital bearing upon some of the major problems of social reconstruction. What is more noteworthy, the deductions are not, for the most part, far-fetched; they are discovered to be truly implicit in the original maxims.

The originality of treatment is suggested in some of the chapter captions—"The Necessity of Intolerance" (Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image), "Freedom from the Angelic Fallacy" (Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy), "The Cultivation of the Uneasy Conscience" (Thou shalt do no murder), "The Counterpoise of Greed" (Thou shalt not covet). The discussion of the baffling and neglected breakdown of sexual morality ("The Achievement of Fidelity") is as true and compelling an exposition of foundation principles as this reviewer knows. That chapter alone justifies the book.

Dr. Trueblood has a rare gift for aphorism: "The error of anticlericalism lies not in what it says about the clergy (which may be justified), but in its *implied flattery* of the laity (which is unjustified)" (p. 48). "Democracy is necessitated by

the fact that all men are sinners; it is made possible by the fact that we know it" (p. 105). He is a popularizer of the best thoughts of greater minds in the best sense of that despised term; his dependence upon Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr is illustrated in the second quotation just given. But he succeeds not merely in presenting the ideas of others with greater brevity and power than the original writers can muster, but often also in truer balance. This is an achievement of great service to those who are trying to press their way through the tangled confusions of our world's present predicament.

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

Rembrandt, the Jews and the Bible, by Franz Landsberger, translated by Felix N. Gerson, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1946, pp. xviii, 189 (with 66 illustrations), $3.

In the days of his prosperity Rembrandt bought a large house in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam. Some biographers believe it was not so much for isolation and peace of mind as for association with a group of people with whom he was sympathetic. He found among the Jews pictorial material and concrete stimulation to the interpretation of biblical stories. When poverty came, he moved for the last time to an unfrequented part of the Ghetto. The nature and the extent of the Jewish influence upon Rembrandt's etchings and paintings is the theme of Landsberger's book.

There is first a conventional, brief life of the artist covering eight pages. The story of the coming of the Jews to Amsterdam, Sephardim, and Ashkenazim, concludes the first chapter. The other chapters are "Rembrandt's Portraits of Jews," "Rembrandt's Scenes of Jewish Daily Life," and "Rembrandt and the Bible."

The representations of Jewish men and women were not portraits, commissioned by the sitters, but the result of Rembrandt's artistic impulses and for the pleasure of art lovers. His models were the Jews he knew so well, and Landsberger makes a somewhat detailed study of fourteen of these pictures. Only three scenes from Jewish life are examined, but there are thirty-four biblical scenes. The works of other artists, reproduced for comparison and study, complete the total of sixty-six illustrations.

The average person looks at a picture superficially, seeing very little of the characteristics that make it a work of art. A study such as this is extremely valuable apart from its specialized Jewish interest, because it suggests and illustrates what art really is and how it may be understood and appreciated. Landsberger is an interpreter and a guide, not a propagandist, thereby producing a discriminating, sound presentation of a very important phase of Rembrandt's art that is worthy of serious study.

Occasionally he seems to be pressing for a meaning. Does the "shadow that falls upon the right cheek" give "a tinge of sorrow" to "Ephraim Bonus" (pp. 48, 49)? The "stooping" of the taller figure in Illustration 25 (p. 79) does not quite seem to be that he may hear better. The lower level of the synagogue floor may not be a genuine inference from the bent knee of the entering figure in Illustration 28 (pp. 85, 87). Certainly the open book "at the back of the seated figure" in Illustration 4 (pp. 31, 32) is an error.

But these are not serious matters; they are practically trivia in the light of the serious work of an author who convincingly and interestingly makes Rembrandt not an illustrator but an important interpreter of the Jews and the Bible.

ROBERT E. KEIGHTON

Christianity Rightly So Called, by Samuel G. Craig, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946, pp. viii, 270, $2.

The author of this volume frankly calls himself a fundamentalist. He defines that term as including the belief "that Christianity has a specific content of its own—factual, doctrinal, and ethical—that was given it once and for all by Christ and His Apostles and that only as this content is retained, at least in substance, do we have what can rightly be called Christianity" (p. vi).

Having stated his position with such preciseness in the foreword of his book, the author colors the entire body of his work with a strong supernaturalism. Typical of the statements which set forth his philosophical and religious positions are the following:

> The supernatural is to such an extent the animating principle of Christianity that Christianity de-supernaturalized is Christianity extinct (p. 10);
> Christianity shorn of the supernatural is Christianity falsely so called (p. 13);
> The choice is not between a miraculous Christianity and a non-miraculous Christianity but between a miraculous Christianity and no Christianity at all (p. 99).

Naturalism is the black beast which now besets Christianity and threatens its life. Hence the naturalistic view of the world and the religious life is the chief target for the intellectual arrows of our author. Arising in the eighteenth century and enduring to the present, the naturalistic version of Christianity attempts to render it acceptable to naturalistic science and naturalistic criticism. Its chief characteristic religiously is that it allows no intrusion of the supernatural into the origin and development of the world and hence can find no room whatsoever for the miraculous in Christianity. All liberals and modernists are classified as of the naturalistic variety.

What we find in this volume, accordingly, is the standard approach to Christianity of traditional supernaturalism. Christianity is held to be supernatural in origin, beginning with the God-man who, becoming a sacrificial offering, supernaturally delivers men from the guilt and corruption of sin as they are regenerated and sanctified by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The record of this supernatural history and activity is recorded in a supernatural book—the Bible. That book is the Word of God and as such is authoritative in all its teachings. The Christian must bind himself to the Word and believe it absolutely.

The weakness of the sheerly supernaturalistic treatment of Christianity is that it refuses to look at the Christian religion from the vantage points of the enlarging experience of the race. It marks a very definite effort to keep oneself within the world view of a former day, rejecting the newer world view made possible by the discoveries of modern science and the formulations of contemporary philosophy. Its viewpoint leaves one with a static, fixed, unprogressive version of Christianity.

For the student of theology the book will be of value chiefly as a disclosure of how a mind enamored with what was for centuries the sole world view of Christians functions in the modern world.

GEORGE W. DAVIS

BOOK NOTICES

When Life Gets Hard, by James Gordon Gilkey, New York, Macmillan, 1945, pp. ix., 138, $1.50.

Following in the line of several earlier books addressed to moderns seeking answer to personal problems, this slender volume treats of issues thrust into the foreground by wartime experiences and yet perennially real to us in the exigencies of modern living. While he writes unmistakably in the vein of liberal Protestantism, the author refers readers interested in the theological basis of his counsel to an earlier companion volume, *God Will Help You.* Here in the current volume there is but brief treatment of religious resources, the major concern being to suggest immediate and practical measures of self-help open to those facing personal hardship. The author's concern is that "those who read these chapters will remember that they aim to be practical and helpful rather than academic." That they prove to be both practical and helpful is the result of the timeliness of the issues and the great good sense of the author. The range of the problems included is wide, and yet the selection is centred upon the more common experiences of these times: the experience of wavering faith, of inner unrest, of uncertainty and frustration, of preoccupation with mundane affairs, of limited resources and the fact of death. Perhaps one of the best of the chapters is that entitled "When Death Takes Someone You Love." Restrained, yet fully sympathetic, it epitomizes the wisdom of experience made ever more real to us in the myriad independencies of modern life: when death comes, we must face our loss, accept our loss, and then make our way through and beyond our loss—by reëntering into the common life, of which the memories and constructive actions of him who has gone have become a part. There is good counsel here in regard to the problem of overwork and fatigue and their effect upon mental outlook, and there is a welcome emphasis upon responsibility for full use of innate resources in the guidance of our personal behavior. But no matter what the issue, the good judgment of the author is in evidence. The language is clear and devoid of a technical terminology; the reader is addressed directly and informally; pertinent illustrative material is used to advantage. The greatest merit of the book is its genuine practicality. Everywhere is evidence of a wisdom gained over long years of pastoral experience in dealing with personal problems in all their variety and uniqueness. While he says much that is capable of bringing both inspiration and confidence, yet the realism and directness of Dr. Gilkey's treatment prevents a "pep-talk" approach: the dominant note throughout is one of courage and hope. It is impossible to reproach the views presented here as Promethean, in view of the author's earlier companion volume. He is concerned to emphasize that the suggestions presented here seek to make real the responsibility of the individual to live at his best, whereas in the earlier volume the relation between this personal effort and God's initiative and care is set out at length. And while the treatment is strident in parts, yet withal it is well balanced and open to immediate application as a help to the multitudes for whom life, in time of postwar adjustment as in wartime itself, is indeed hard.

ROBERT MELVIN MURPHY

The Peace That Is Left, by Emile Cammaerts, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. x, 150, $2.

Those of us who have endured the war at a safe distance would do well to employ this little book as an approach to understanding those Christian thinkers whose minds

have been stripped of sentimentalism by the catastrophic nature of their environment. The author is a Belgian poet, playwright, and patriot, but more than this he is a Christian leader who feels it necessary to serve disillusioned youth with a realistic message of hope. Dealing primarily with the possibilities of peace in the kind of world he looked upon in the months preceding VE Day, Dr. Cammaerts directs our minds inward to seek peace, but without abandoning the responsibility of working for political and social peace. The book is reflective and devotional in character, combining a thoroughly realistic appraisal of things as they are with a positive confidence that God's purposes for man cannot be defeated, although they may be delayed.

MILTON C. WESTPHAL

Lazy-Man-Rest-Not: Burma Letters of Brayton C. Case, compiled by Randolph L. Howard, Philadelphia, Judson, ©1946, pp. 128, $1.25.

The title is a translation of the name of the village where Brayton C. Case established his school of agriculture. The book is made up largely of letters written by the missionary, edited by a secretary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society who had been associated with him for twelve years in Burma. "These letters speak to us with that unrestrained urgency so characteristic of his every action. Through them shine the message of his life: Man cannot live by bread alone, but man must have bread to live." To the familiar, "Preach, teach, heal," he added a fourth imperative, "Feed." The volume is essentially autobiographical, and the letters have the special value of not having been written for publication. This missionary evidently went to his field with sane purposes, which he carried out with unusual common sense. He did not fail to appreciate the values in the social and religious customs of the native peoples, and was careful to adhere to his principle, "I do not use agriculture for bait." While he shared the rigors of the flight to India with General Stilwell, he does not play up these experiences in his letters. Rev. Herman G. Tegenfeldt, who assisted him in his rehabilitation work on his way back to Burma, describes the return trek in more detail in a long letter written to the missionary's son (pp. 114-125). A letter from Dr. Gordon E. Gates, written also to Clarke Case, gives the facts concerning his father's death by drowning while on a journey in search of seed rice. This simple, but gripping, volume is worthy of a place beside *Burma Diary* and *Burma Surgeon.*

RITTENHOUSE NEISSER

The Devotional Life of Christian Leaders, by Clarence W. Cranford, Philadelphia, Judson, ©1946, pp. 71.

This little volume was written as one of the four Basic Courses in the *Northern Baptist Training Series.* It is intended for use by the workers in church schools to make their leadership more effective. Accepting this aim as his guide, Dr. Cranford goes on to elaborate the steps which he feels are essential in the development of the Christian's devotional life. These consist of meditation and prayer, so that God will have a chance to speak in the depths of the soul; an understanding of the Bible, so that the God spoken about there and known supremely in Jesus may become real; building oneself into the church through worship and fellowship; and, finally, that faith may become effective, entering into Christian service and witnessing to one's faith. The chapters follow one another with mounting effect, leaving no doubt in the reader's mind that they grow out of personal experience. They have the ring of truth about them. Those who use the course should be led into increasingly satisfying Christian experience leading to the vitalization of their personal faith and its social expression.

GEORGE W. DAVIS

Church Posters and Publicity, Graphically Presented, by Homer H. Seay, Columbus, Wartburg Press, ©1946, pp. 79 (illustrated), $3.

The author is an experienced publicity and promotional director for large mercantile and industrial organizations. This book is the result of many requests for suggestions in promoting local church activities by the use of posters, display signs, and religious symbols, providing practical rules for designing, lettering, coloring, and waterproofing. The use of mechanical drawing aids is carefully explained, and there are numerous suggestions for making transparencies, chalk illustrations, three-dimensional displays, and stage "props" of papier-mâché. Several pages interpret the origin and use of church symbols, and a bulletin board section provides "quotes" for church days and special occasions. There are thirty-five pages of religious symbols, bulletin board designs, and alphabets. According to the book cover, *Church Posters and Publicity* "covers a field heretofore untouched." The statement is true in the sense that the material presented is in a single bound volume. However, duplicating machine companies and church bulletin supply houses issue loose-leaf brochures with practically the same content for stencil work, and most religious book stories display authoritative volumes on church symbolism and church publicity. The author claims no originality for the material presented, and his book ignores many common mediums of church publicity, such as the weekly calendar, the monthly parish paper, church letters, and newspaper advertisements. Nevertheless, Mr. Seay has performed a service by digesting much of the available material in this field and presenting it graphically in a beautifully-bound volume which could be a valuable reference book for the church library or for alert young people who seek to promote their group activities by original work. Church school teachers can find hand-work ideas for children of junior and intermediate ages, and the entire book is usable in publicizing and planning projects for the summer vacation church school. PAUL Q. BROOKS

Piety and Poverty in Chile, by Robert Cecil Moore, Nashville, Broadman, ©1946, pp. 130, $1.50.

This tidy little volume, by one who has been engaged in evangelistic work in that country for a quarter of a century, offers real help to the understanding of life in Chile, one of the presently most democratic countries in Latin America. It is full of information about our neighbors to the south. As the title suggests, the book is built on the theory that economics and religion are mutually retroactive. Most of the space is devoted to an appraisal of the influence of the Roman Catholic church on Chile during the colonial period, that is, for the 250 years prior to the opening of the nineteenth century. The conclusion is "that Roman Catholicism as a religious system not only failed to bring out the best possibilities of the Chilean people during the colonial period but actually served as a serious impediment to the normal development." This conclusion is well documented. In the last chapter on "Chile Today," the author strikes a hopeful note. The baneful influences of the colonial period are being overcome as the result of the theoretical separation of church and state, the growth of literacy, and the partial industrialization of the country. There are now about sixty thousand Protestants in Chile, and the grip of Romanism is weakening in reality, if not admittedly. It is an interesting and informing little book.

HOWARD WAYNE SMITH

Much in Little: on the United States Navy, by Ruby Lee Adams, Nashville, privately printed, 1946, pp. 106 (illustrated), $3.50.

This is a very attractive little capsule-history of the United States Navy—what

it is and how it got that way—with especial attention to its exploits in the days following Pearl Harbor. A quick survey of the high spots of our naval history, with reproductions of well-known paintings of famous moments in our naval yesterdays and thumbnail sketches of the earlier admirals from Esek Hopkins to W. S. Sims, forms a prelude to the far more detailed recital of the significant moments since Pearl Harbor. The story is told in the form of a series of crisp paragraphs and is copiously illustrated by official Navy and Marine photographs. Throughout the volume the emphasis is evident: "A strong navy is the bulwark of world peace." It is a very workmanlike little volume into which is ingeniously packed a deal of useful and interesting information regarding the origin and history of the Navy's "three-way stretch." It should serve as a convenient book of quick reference about ships and men, especially as memories begin once more, as they always do, to grow dim.

MORTON S. ENSLIN

The Fallow Land, by Constancio C. Vigil, translated (from the fourteenth Spanish edition) by Lawrence Smith, Boston, Bruce Humphries, n. d., pp. 207, $2.50.

Here is a gem from Latin America. "Out of this world," our youth would say. Its charm, wisdom, vision, and power are as elusive of description or definition as are those of the Old Testament—and quite as real. When you finish the book, you feel the spell of the Galilean—that at least you have been sitting at the feet of one who knew him intimately, who spoke with his very accent. If you enjoyed Tagore at his best, if Gibran's *Prophet* spoke to your condition, then you will place *The Fallow Land* among the choicest of the treasures in your library. Typographically also, the book is a joy. And the little woodcuts by the Chilean artist, Alfredo Adduard, express exquisitely and powerfully the mood of the chapters which follows. Even in these days of food shortages, if you have two loaves of bread, sell one and buy this hyacinth.

JAMES SHACKELFORD DAUERTY

We Have This Ministry, edited by John Oliver Nelson, New York, Association Press, ©1946, pp. xi, 93, $1.50.

This volume is a symposium by professional church leaders on "church vocations for men and women." Its purpose is to present the challenge and opportunity of professional church service. The opening chapter, by the editor, suggests the importance of every Christian's accepting responsibility for service in his church. The following chapters, by selected and successful workers in their respective fields, emphasize the need for professional workers in the church, show what qualifications are needed in various areas of Christian work, and point out the wide variety of fields open to the professional worker. The book has but one purpose: to secure enlistments for full-time Christian service. As such, its approach is sane and objective, and one which should prove helpful to young people in the process of making a vocational choice. Pastors, counselors, and teachers of courses in vocational guidance will find it useful.

JOHN W. THOMAS

The Christian Pattern, by Hugh Stevenson Tigner, New York, Macmillan, 1946, pp. vii, 80, $1.50.

An interestingly fresh presentation of essential Christianity by the minister of the Mount Vernon Heights Congregational Church, this little volume should prove stimulating to preachers. The style is simple, the language nontechnical, but the subject matter is profound. Under six headings, namely Worship, Thanksgiving, Humility, Human Pride, Service, and Love, Dr. Tigner reëxamines the fundamentals of the Christian message in a way which discloses his positive and constructive

liberalism. The illustrations employed are delightfully apt and will doubtless be employed again and again by those who turn a volume like this into grist for their mill. Dr. Tigner's liberalism is mature enough to enable him to be critical of his own position and that of his fellow travelers. He apparently has been close enough to human need to appreciate that any school of theology must satisfy the soul spiritually, no matter how modern its position or how scientific its logic may be.

MILTON C. WESTPHAL

The Death of the Son of God, by Herman Hoeksema, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1946, pp. 276, $2.50.

This is the third volume of a series providing an exposition of the Heidelberg Confession and intended to make available "a complete development of the doctrines of the Christian faith." It treats Questions and Answers 29-44, covering Lord's Days 11-16. It is claimed that herein "the author has rendered Reformed Theology a great service, and brought the fruits of the Reformation clearly into prominence." Those more competent, and interested, than I must decide on the degree of success attained. So far as I could observe from a somewhat rapid survey of the volume no slightest taint of modernism (or of the modern world of thought and life) is to be detected in these pages.

MORTON S. ENSLIN

Genesis: a Devotional Commentary, by W. H. Griffith Thomas, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1946, pp. 507, $3.50.

Laws protect the consumer from misrepresentation upon labels attached to foods; but as far as I know there is no protection afforded the prospective buyer of a book from certain kinds of gross misrepresentation of the contents of a volume. The labeling of this book is misleading. There is no indication, either upon its title-page or upon the next where the copyright is indicated, that this is not a new book published for the first time in 1946. The date of 1946 is given in two places; no other date appears. Nowhere in the text of the volume is there the statement that this is a reprint of an old book. Yet it is a reprinting of a book written and published long ago. How old it is I have been unable to determine. The author died over twenty years ago. After a search of the union catalogue of all the libraries in the vicinity of Philadelphia I found cards for two copies of this book published in England; but upon neither of these books was there a date of publication. Failing in my search I was forced to attempt to date the book by its contents. To judge by the views held of Genesis in this commentary the book is very, very old. As a commentary upon the text of the book of Genesis it is worthless; as a book of devotion it may serve those for whom devotional practice consists in periodic indulgence in flights of fancy in which fact and reason are completely disregarded. My feeling of irritation at the misleading, if not dishonest, omission of any reference to the former publication is modified slightly by finding in an obscure place upon the dust-jacket a mention of a previous publication by the American Tract Society in London. This does not excuse the publisher for the willful omission which misrepresents an important fact. It is a pity that some will be misled by a bright dust-jacket and the date of 1946 prominently displayed upon the title-page and will spend $3.50 of their money for a book which is without value as a commentary and insipid as a book of devotion. Obviously nothing has been said in detail of the contents. The attempt to pawn off an old and completely antiquated work as a new publication does not deserve to be dignified by a review. One has a right to demand scrupulous honesty in the labeling of books, particularly of books which deal with religion and morality.

JAMES B. PRITCHARD

BOOKS RECEIVED

* *Christian World Mission,* edited by William A. Anderson, Nashville, Commission on Ministerial Training of the Methodist Church, ©1946, pp. vii, 275, $2.

* *Two Worlds,* by William B. Ziff, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. 335, $3.

* *The New Testament: Its Making and Meaning,* by Albert E. Barnett, Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury, ©1946, pp. 304, $2.50.

* *Man and Society in the New Testament,* by Ernest F. Scott, New York, Scribner, 1946, pp. viii, 299, $2.75.

* *The Kingdom Relationship,* by Isaiah Jefferson Brame, Nampa (Idaho), privately printed, 1946, pp. 141, $1.75.

So You are Thinking! by S. C. Michelfelder, Columbus, Wartburg Press, ©1946, pp. 83, $1.

This is a series of five essays on the following topics: getting married, having a family, joining a church, calling it off (the author's idea of an attractive title for the discussion of divorce), and making a will. The book, written in the second person, is a compendium of rather commonplace advice. Perhaps it was helpful when delivered in sermonic form, but it is much too elementary, in both style and content, to be helpful to any reader who has given the least thought to the basic problems of everyday living with which it deals. It might conceivably have some value for those who have given no thought to the subjects considered.

* *The Christian Heritage in America,* by George Hedley, New York, Macmillan, 1946, pp. x, 177, $2.

* *Men and Hunger,* by Harold Steere Guetzkow and Paul Hoover Bowman, Elgin, Brethren Publishing House, ©1946, pp. 72, $1.

* *Right Thinking,* by Edwin Arthur Burtt, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. xi, 764, $4.

* *The Source of Human Good,* by Henry N. Wieman, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, ©1946, pp. vii, 312, $3.50.

* *A Trial on Trial,* by Maximilian J. St. George and Lawrence Dennis, National City Rights Committee, ©1946, pp. 503, $5.

* *Ancient Christian Writers: Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch,* translated by James A. Kleist, Westminster (Md.), Newman Bookshop, 1946, pp. ix, 162, $2.50.

* *The Eternal Gospel,* by Gerald Heard, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. xii, 234, $2.

* *Eyes of Faith,* by Paul S. Minear, Philadelphia, Westminster, ©1946, pp. 307, $3.

* *Pathways through the Bible,* by Mortimer J. Cohen, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1946, pp. xxv, 549 (illustrated), $2.50.

* *A Beginning Greek Book,* by John Merle Rife, New Concord (Ohio), privately printed, ©1946, pp. x, 215, $2.50.

* *New Testament Evangelism,* by Arthur C. Archibald, Philadelphia, Judson, ©1946, pp. 149, $2.

* *The Rebuilding of the German Church,* by Stewart W. Herman, New York, Harper, ©1946, pp. xix, 297, $2.50.

Christianity and Liberalism, by J. Gresham Machen, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1946, pp. 189, $2.50.

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* To be reviewed.

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